CHOPIN

12 STUDIES

OP.25

STUDENT'S EDITION

BY

ALFRED CORTOT

TRANSLATED BY

M. PARKINSON

> Study, not only the difficult passage, but the difficulty itself reduced to its most elementary principles.
>
> ALFRED CORTOT

EDITIONS SALABERT

(COLLECTION MAURICE SENART)

PARIS
22, Rue Chauchat

NEW-YORK
1, East 57th Street N. Y.

Printed in France

Table

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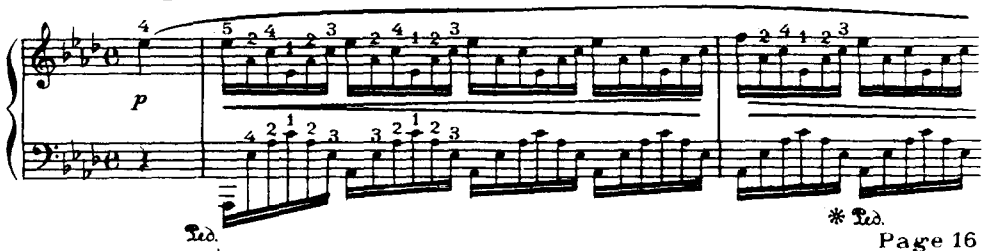

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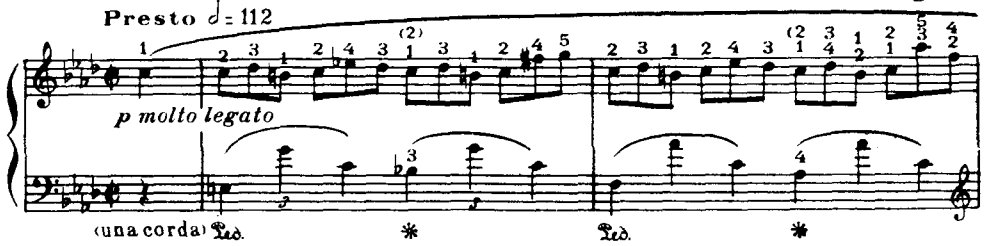
Presto ♩= 112



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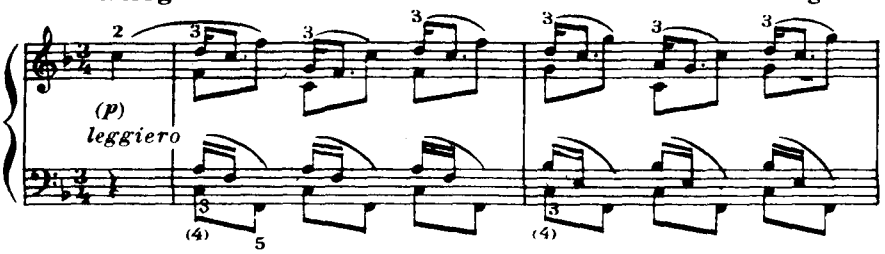

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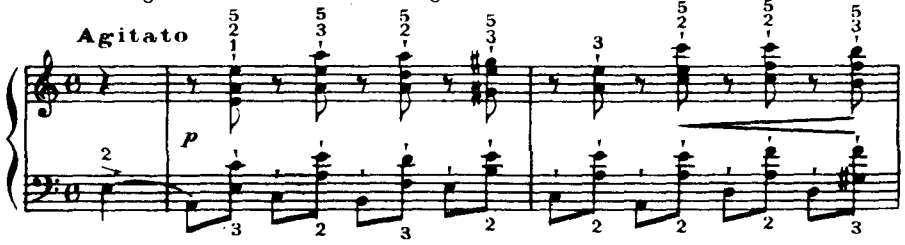

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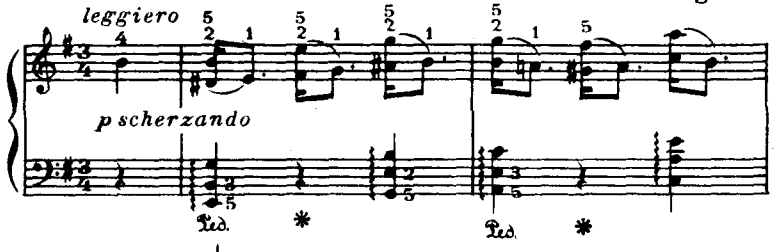

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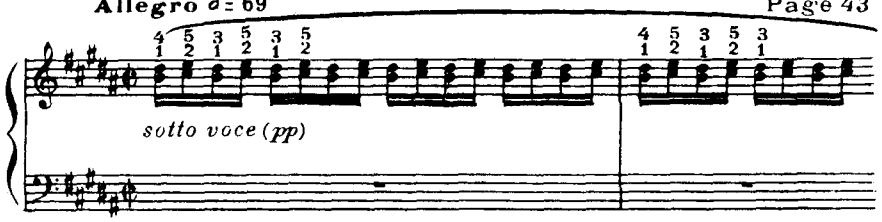

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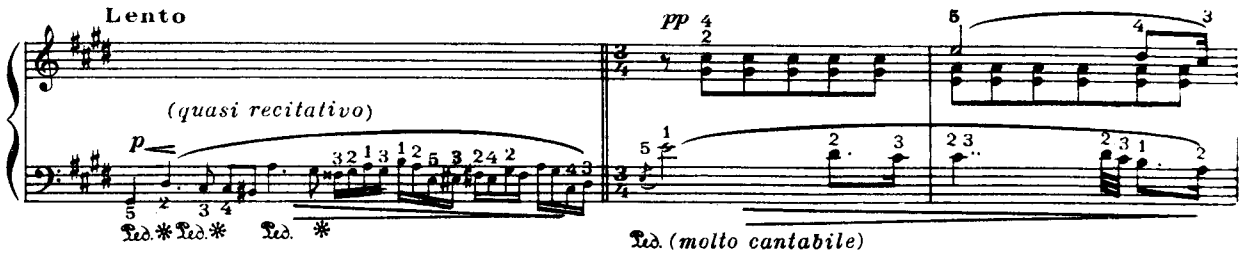
3 m. 50



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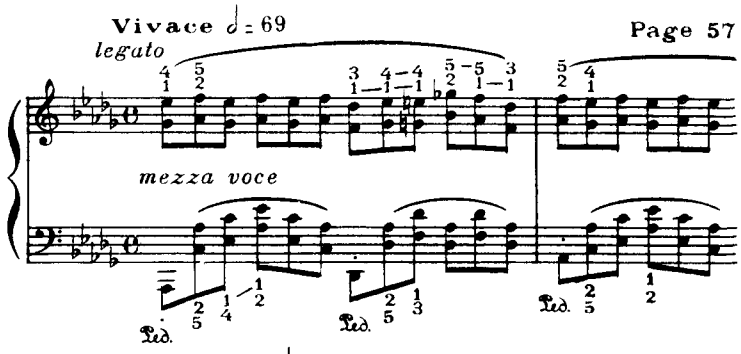
1 m. 10



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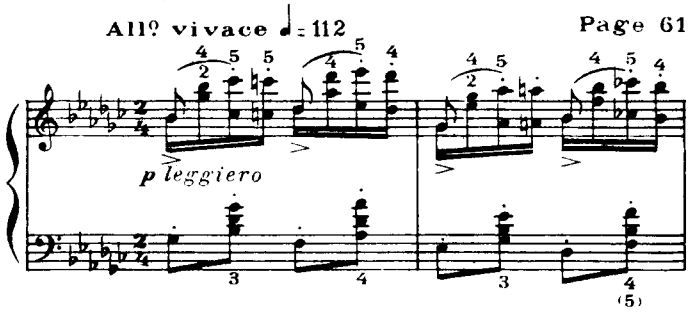
1 m. 7



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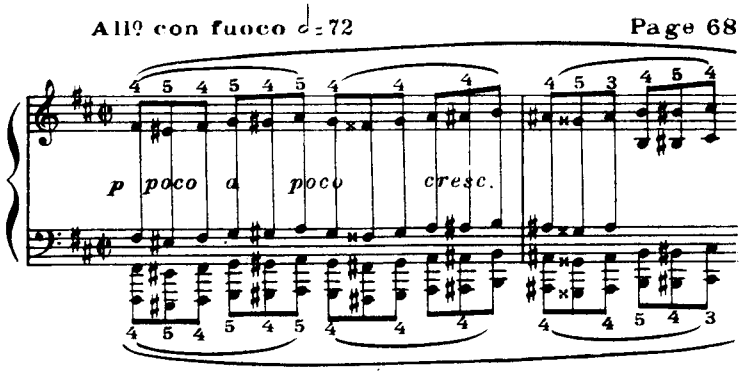
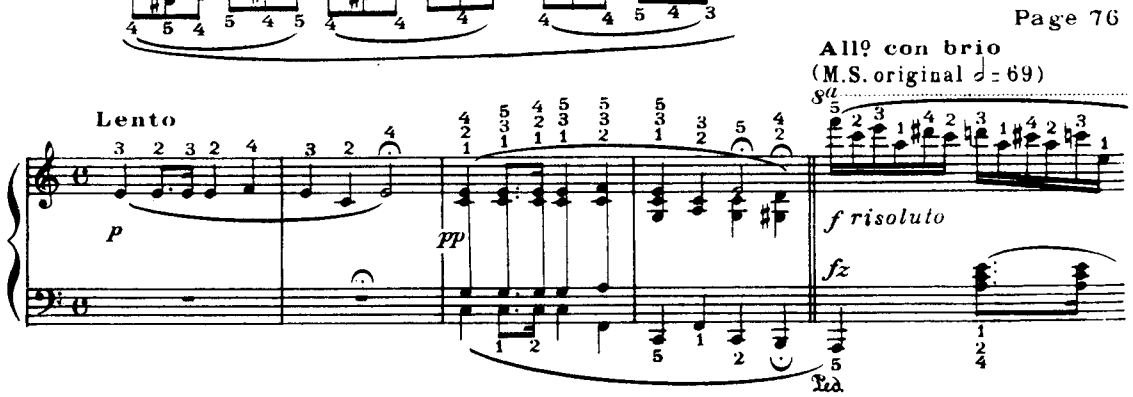
3 m. 45



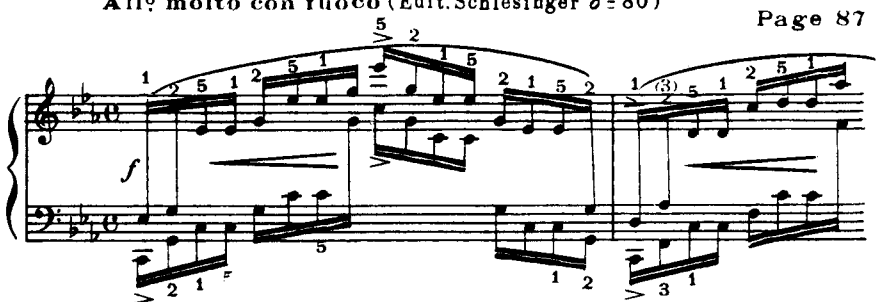
STUDY Nº 11

4 m.



STUDY Nº 12

2 m. 45



FREDERICK CHOPIN

12 STUDIES

(Op. 25)

(Composed between 1830 and 1834)

FOREWORD

In publishing this Edition of Chopin's compositions, we propose to offer the public a final text, unimpaired by doubtful traditions and misprints which have been too often superstitiously respected in previous editions – and, at the same time, a rational method of study founded on a searching analysis of technical difficulties.

The essential principle of this method is to practise, not so much the difficult passage taken as a whole, but the particular difficulty it presents by reducing the latter to its elements.

This principle will hold good for all pianoforte practising; it does away with mechanical work which degrades the study of an Art essentially featured by sensibility and intelligence – and though it may appear superficially slow, ensures in fact definite progress.

Both teacher and pupil will find in the practice-formulae explained hereafter a basis from which to evolve new exercises suited to the individual difficulties peculiar to each performer.

We have not burdened the text with aesthetic observations. Rules may indeed be set down concerning the manual practice of an Art : but personality and taste have never followed rules.

ALFRED CORTOT.

Paris 1914.

N.B. — *The metronomic indications that appear at the beginning of each Study are those given either in the original manuscript or in Schlesinger's Parisian edition published while Chopin was alive. We have added our own suggestions as to the approximate duration of each piece. (See Thematic Table).*

STUDY N° 1

(Op. 25)

« To have an idea of his playing, one must imagine somebody playing an aeolian harp - a harp, however, « able to produce the whole range of tonalities - and that the artist's hand, plucking here and plucking there, « is tracing in rich profusion intricate arabesques of sound, and yet so that one can hear a deep lower note « and a delicate treble throughout the whole performance ».

This is how Schumann expresses his feelings after having heard Chopin play this Study, and further on he writes :

- « The Study in A Flat is more of a poem than a study. You would be greatly mistaken in believing « that he brings out every one of the smaller notes. His playing is more like a long undulation of the chord « of A Flat major which the pedal lengthens right up to the high register. Through this harmonious blending « of notes, you can hear the wonderful melody pouring forth in broad accents. About half-way through, « like a twin melody, a tenor voice out-tops the flood of chords. When the Study comes to an end, it seems « to you that a radiant image has just vanished, like those which appear to us in dreams and that we still « long to gaze upon when we open our eyes ».

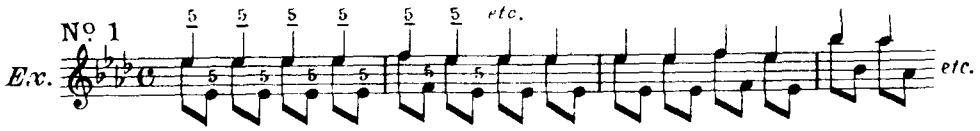
These lines contain in substance what is essential for the rendering of this composition, consequently for its technical preparation.

They emphasize the truly vocal character of the melodic line as well as the importance of rendering its perfect legato and delicate, even and deep tone in spite of the exclusive use of one finger only and of certain particular wide-stretches.

We also understand from Schumann's words what perfect technique, what lightness of touch and what subtle knowledge of both keyboard and pedal went towards creating the poetical and vaporous atmosphere in which Chopin shrouded the arpeggio design which is the harmonic - but almost immaterial frame of this melody.

These two elements therefore call for quite separate study in detail, and they should be blended into a harmonious whole only when the particular difficulties of each have been overcome.

First of all, practise the melodic line to ensure firmness and quality of touch of the 5th finger of the right hand which — in our edition — plays the vocal and expressive part.

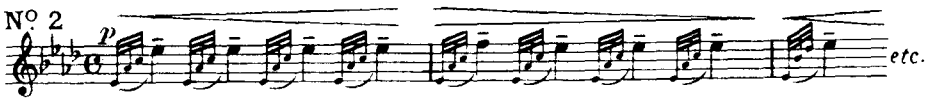


With the exception of the last six bars, practise the whole Study in this way, by fragments of eight bars, first of all *mezzo forte* throughout steadily sustaining the tone of the crotchets.

During this exercise, the 5th finger should keep firm and slightly curved and the wrist very flexible in order to facilitate the successive leaps from one octave to the other, the hand being raised high above the keyboard for this movement.

When the student has mastered the neatness of attack dealt with in the above-mentioned exercise, he should then practise the dynamics of the upper part playing the quavers of the lower part *piano* throughout the exercise.

Then, practise with dynamics, the following variant which will be usefully employed for the whole Study and compose the arpeggio throughout the exercise with the last three notes of each beat :



The smaller notes should be played quickly and lightly, only grazing the keyboard without leaving the fingers on the keys, while the 5th finger should give timbre to the melody by keeping the key pressed down during the whole length of the crotchet. Great care should be taken not to replace the action required of the fingers by a movement of the hand.

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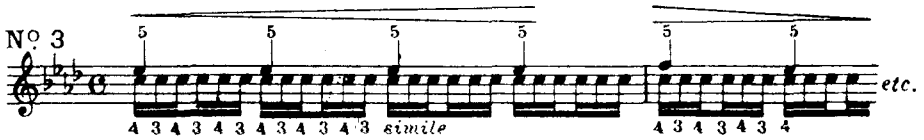
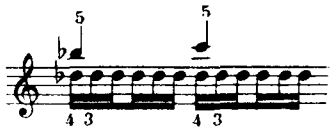
Further, employing for the sextolet the last note of each arpeggio :

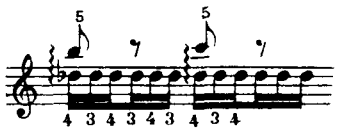


The wide-stretch of this variant will not always permit of the upper notes being held.

Ex.
11th bar

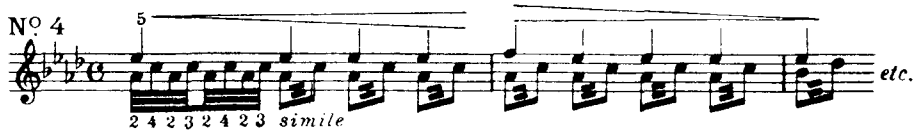


in this case, play thus :



In order to acquire perfect independence of the 5th finger, we recommend practising the arpeggios with the 3rd and the 4th finger alternately throughout this variant and the following one — though they are not used constantly thus while performing.

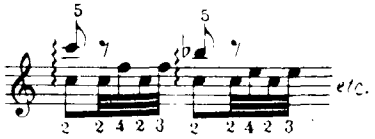
Further, practise thus :



The smaller notes alternately *legato* and *staccato*, but ***pp***, throughout, only the melody being played with dynamics.

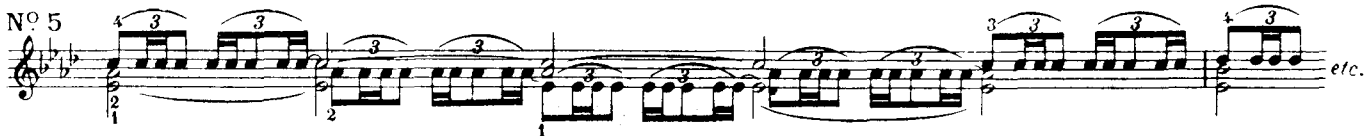
The wide-stretch difficulty mentioned in N° 3 will sometimes compel the student to modify the formula as follows :

6th bar



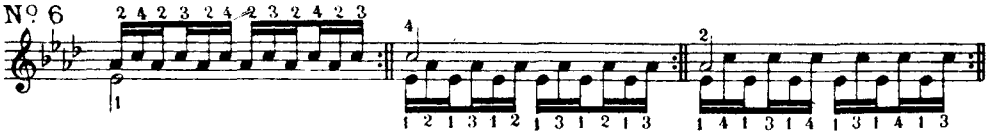
The student having by the help of the foregoing practice acquired the ease and the quality of tone required by the expressive sweep of the melodic line, he must now endeavour to acquire evenness, lightness and limpidity for the accompaniment figure.

First, for the right hand, practise each arpeggio position, leaving out the 5th finger, thus :

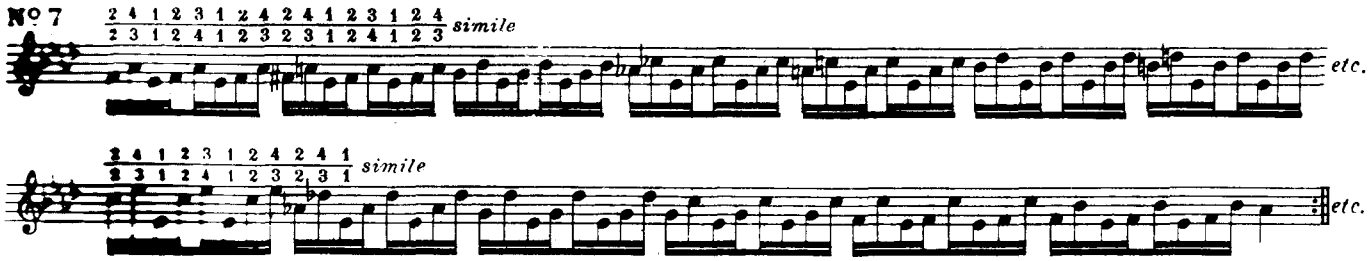


Next, with the following rhythms :

Then :



Finally, transposing the following formulae into every key :

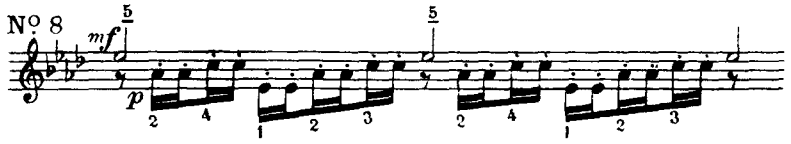


Great care **should** be taken to play with the fingers only, alternately *legato* and *staccato*, the hand perfectly steady, **gradually** quickening the tempo.

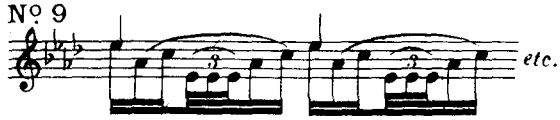
Practise every **sextolet** group of the left hand according to the above-mentioned formulae leaving out

Then, practise the right hand again, this time adding the melody and with the final fingering.

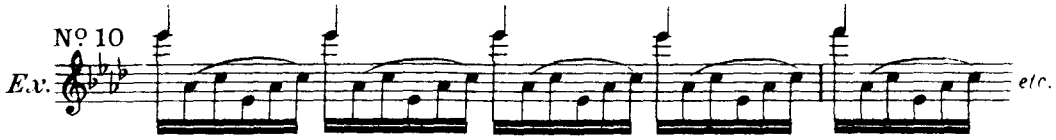
First :



Next, in order to avoid heaviness of the thumb :

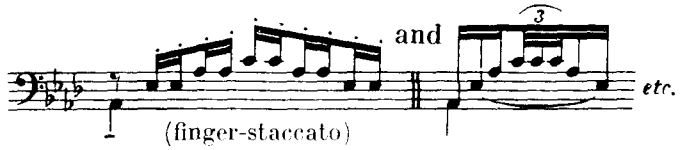


Further, practise the right hand as written in the text, but playing all the upper melodic notes one octave higher.

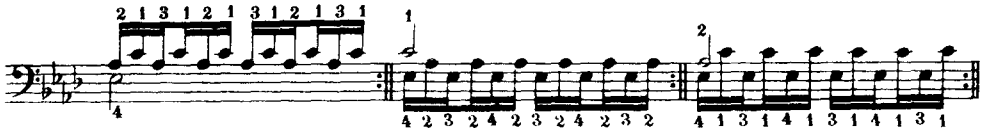


Avoid slackening of speed or disturbance of tone-quality due to jerky attacks produced by the shifting of the hand.

For the left hand, practise formulae Nº 8 and 9, but inversely, i.e. :



Practise also according to formula Nº 6.



Before combining the two hands for final practice, each hand should be studied separately with the following rhythms :

Transpose the whole Study into A major employing the fingerings of A Flat.

We wish to repeat that the poetical and aerial quality of tone required for the acompaniment is entirely dependent on light playing of *the fingers.* Therefore, never let any movement of the hand cause heaviness to the finger-touch as this might cause an impurity of tone that would destroy the impression of a harmonious shower of notes which the performer should endeavour to evoke.

For the same reasons, the sustaining pedal should be released with great suppleness and never pressed down fully in order to avoid, as much as possible, any hiatus.

The una corda pedal should of course be employed simultaneously ,except for those particularly eloquent passages so obviously emphasized by their expressive melodic outline that they need not be mentioned here.

ALFRED CORTOT

12 STUDIES

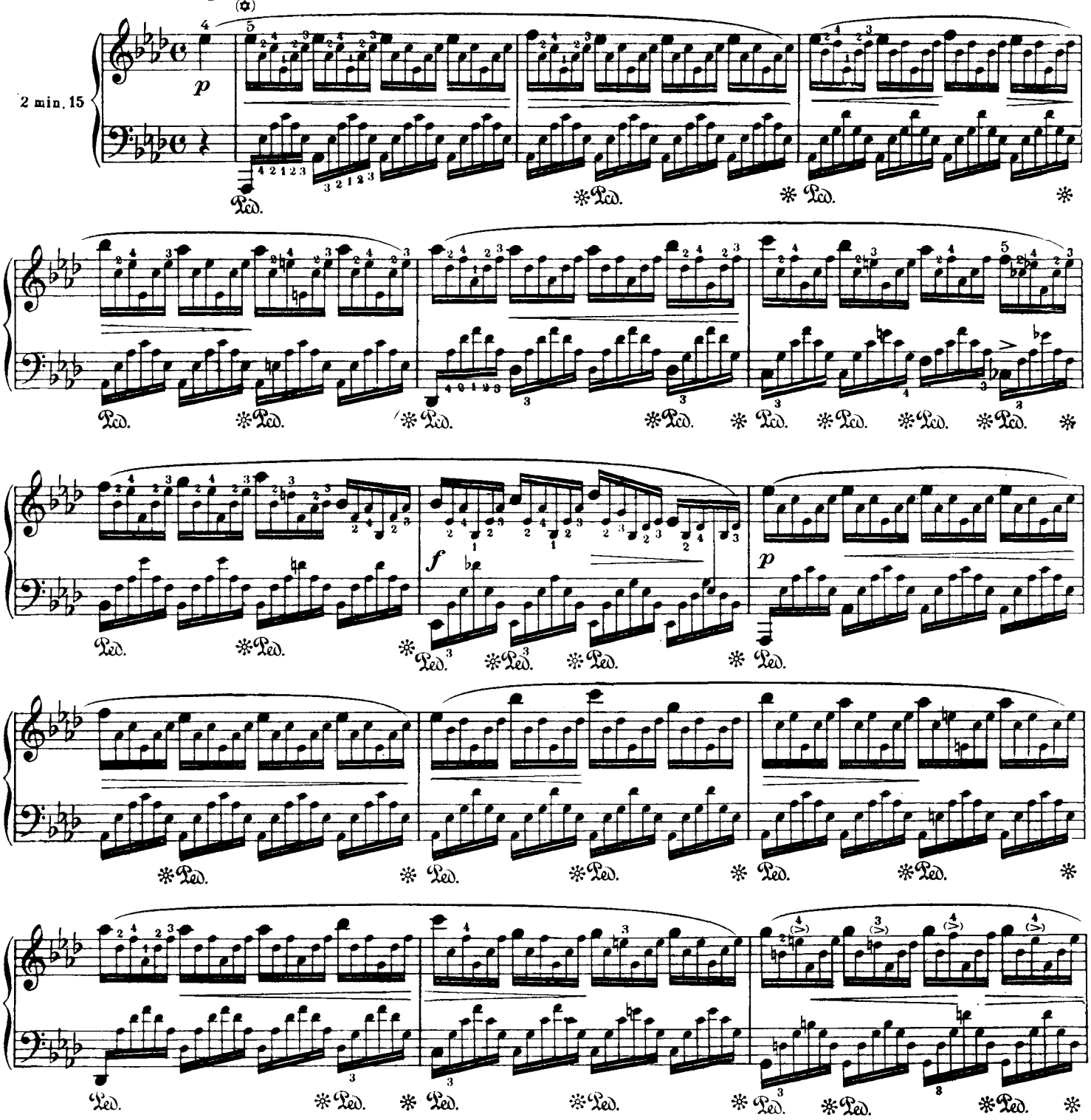
(Op. 25)

dedicated to the Countesse d'AGOULT

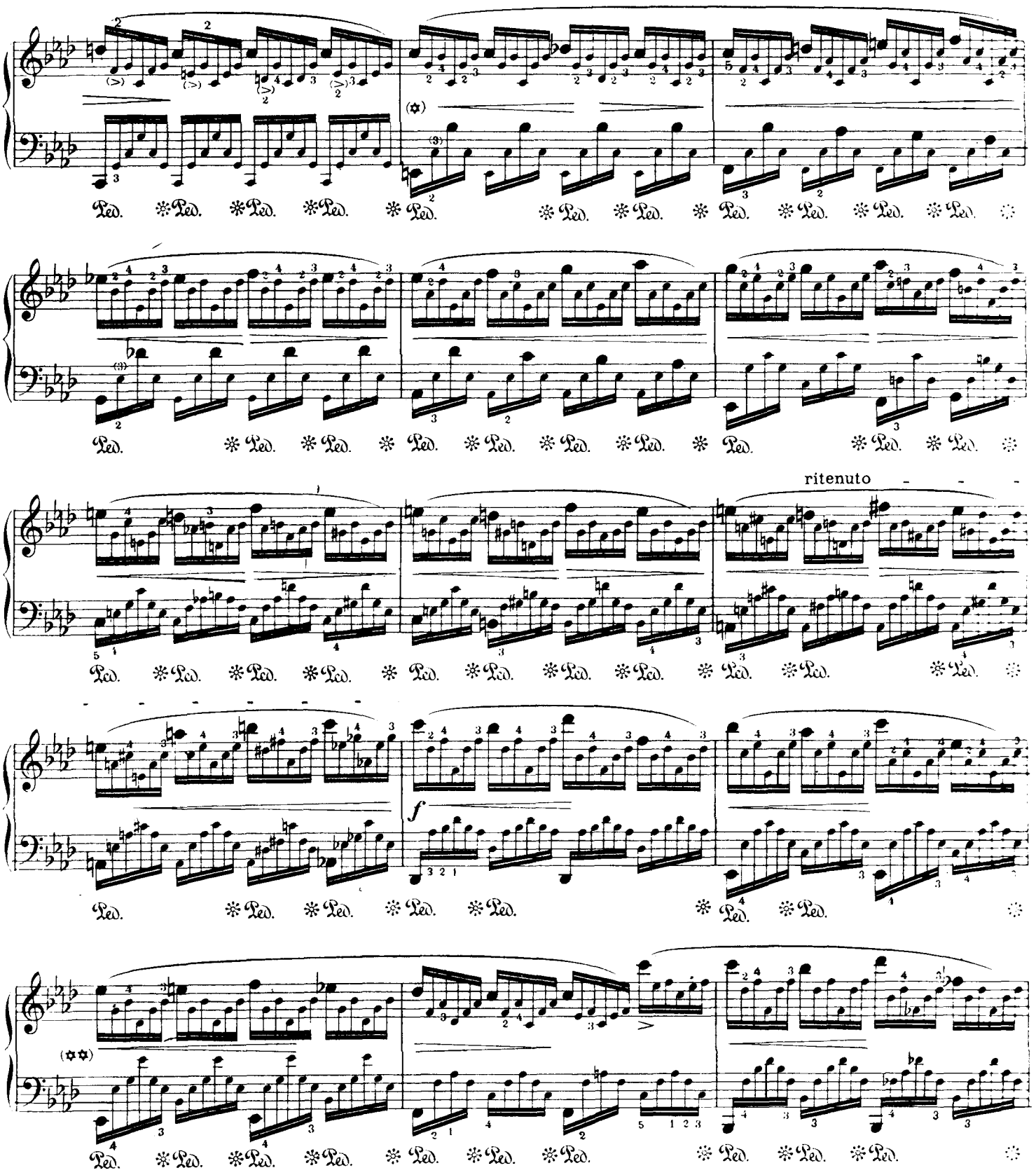
Frederic CHOPIN

STUDY N° 1

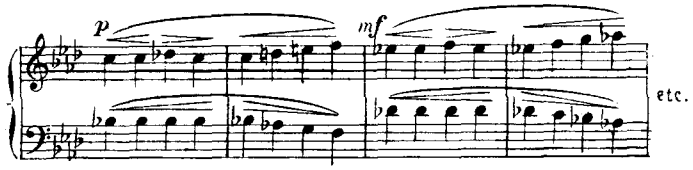
Allegro sostenuto (♩ = 104)



(*) In our opinion more regularity and accuracy of the accompaniment design are obtained by employing substitution of fingers on the 3rd and 6th note of the sextolet, than by always using the same fingers on the same notes : in any case, it proves profitable practice. However, a better result may be obtained as regards fluidity and speed by employing the following fingerings : 524124 or 523123.



* The traditional dynamics of Bars 17-18-19 and 20, and which appear to be quite justified by the musical outline of the two singing voices, are the following :



** The thumb of the left hand *over* the thumb of the right hand.

cresc.

appassionato

fz p

pp

dim.

smorzando

pp

leggieriss.

ppp

tr

* Execute thus :

STUDY N° 2

(Op. 25)

In this Study which requires to be interpreted both with natural feeling and with refinement, there is no need to emphasize that virtuosity which we considered as being the essential musical factor in order to render Study N° 5 Op. 10.

Here, on the contrary, the aim should be to give the composition a gentle poetic atmosphere and the perfection of the execution should merely leave an impression of veiled beauty — something in the spirit of Virgil's « Fugit ad salices ».

Now only virtuosity of the highest class can ensure without any sense of display the requisite beauty of tone, the character of swift flight and the refined grace of the design played by the right hand.

It will therefore be imperative, before beginning to practise the Study itself to acquire the lightness and motion exclusively of the fingers, steadiness of the hand, and flexibility of the wrist (all of which will ultimately ensure a perfect performance of this work) by practising the following exercises :

1° For evenness of the fingers and steadiness of the hand, thus :

A. *r.h.*

to be continued chromatically.

The breves represent the mute position of the fingers which should only touch the keys without pressing them down. Practise alternately *legato* and *staccato*, gradually quickening the tempo, from ***pp***, to ***mf*** The fingers should remain in close contact with the keyboard and should not be raised forcibly.

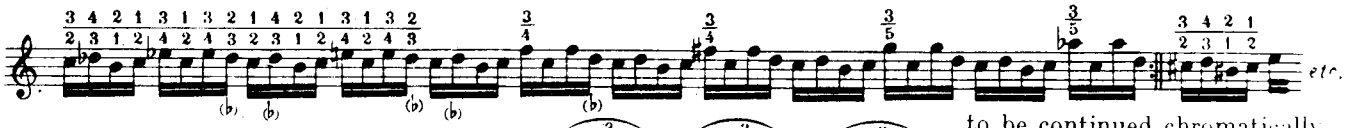
Variants of the same exercice :

A2

With the 5th finger extended :

A3

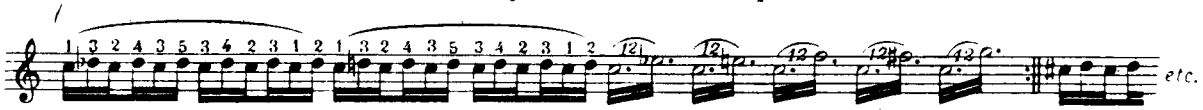
2° In order to acquire suppleness of wrist-movements and steadiness of the hand in spite of extensions, practise thus :



to be continued chromatically

Use the following rhythms :

3° For substitutions of fingers on the same key and to achieve equal force in their actions, thus :

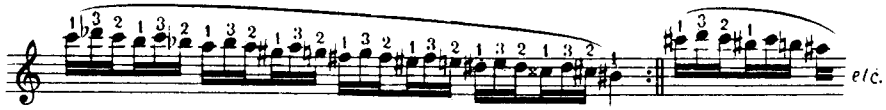


to be continued chromatically

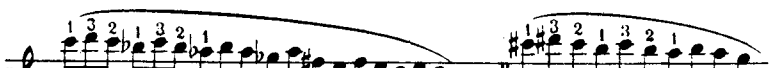
The three last positions given in this exercise (in fourths and fifths) should not be used if their practice causes strain or undue stretch of the fingers.

4° For lightness and legato of the thumb, 2nd and 3rd finger of the right hand of which the succession will constantly recur in the course of this Study :

A.



B.



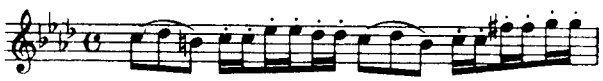
Further, practise the right hand part throughout in fragments of a few bars, gradually linking them together. Repeat each fragment about ten times with the following rhythms :

Then, in order to develop lightness of the fingers :

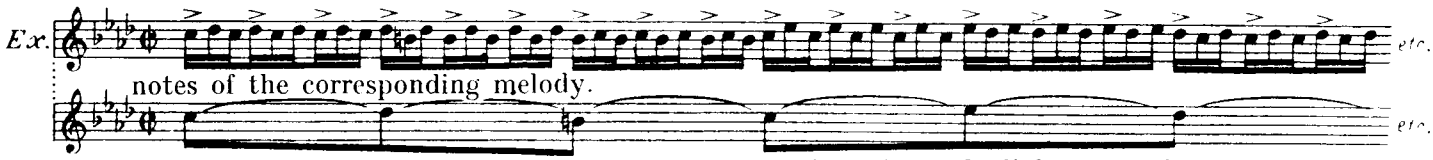
Next, combining the finger-staccato and the legato :

A.

B.

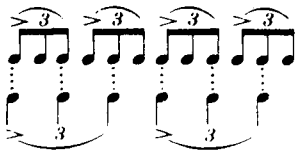


And, finally, binding each note to the following one with a shake in ternary rhythm to obtain perfect legato throughout.



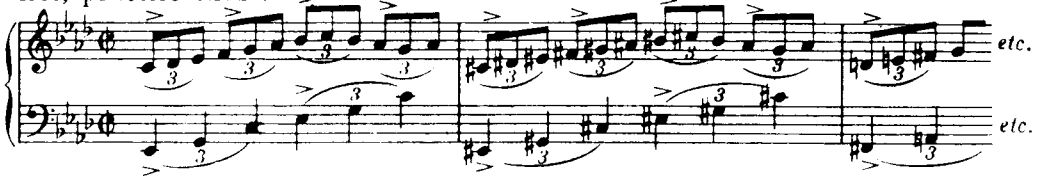
While practising the above exercise, full attention should be paid to the lightness and a correct movement of the thumb, and to avoiding any abrupt movement or strong accent which would impair the character of the piece as well as the quality of the practising.

Before combining the two hands for the final practise of these pages, it will be necessary to get accustomed to the minor difficulties arising from the superposition of two different rhythms :



the triplets in crotchets should be played strictly regularly in spite of the discreet part played by the left hand as it is they which create its individual rhythm.

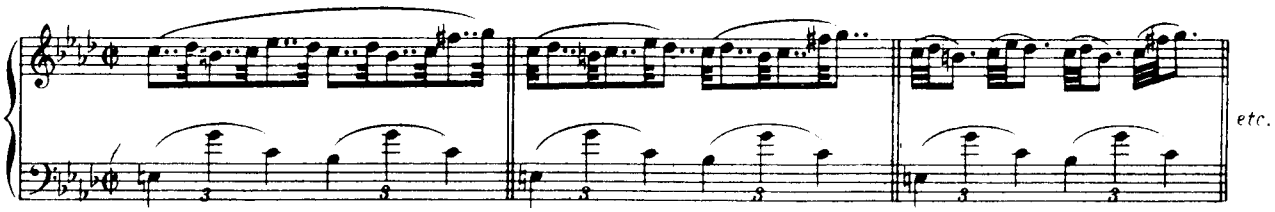
First, practise thus :

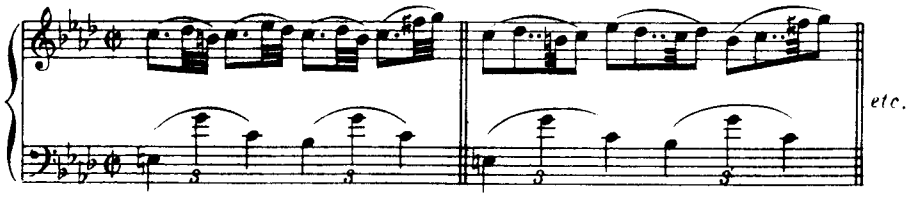


to be continued chromatically in every major key.

Make the accent very precisely, with the fingers only. When performing this Study, this accent should of course be softer, more blended and it should be heard only as the audible expression of an inner rhythmical feeling but without impairing the melodic outline.

For the combined practice of the two hands, we recommend the following variants :





We insist here that it is most advisable, as well for the practice of the foregoing exercises as for the ultimate perfecting of the Study, to apply the rules which J. Ph. Rameau sets down in his Essay : « de la

Rameau says first of all :

« The fact of keeping fingers 1 and 5 on the edge of the keys leads the performer to curve the other fingers in such a way that they also are on the edge of the keys ; by letting the hand droop, as we have previously explained, the fingers will curve quite naturally as required and — for the time being — they shall not be either extended or curved further, except in cases when it is not possible to do otherwise. The wrist shall remain supple and this suppleness being imparted to the fingers will afford them the freedom and lightness required ; meanwhile, the hand being quite limp only supports the fingers and leads them up or down to those parts of the keyboard that they cannot reach by their own action. »

And further, he says :

« Stronger movements shall be used only in cases when slighter ones are not sufficient : and even then, if a finger can reach the key without moving the hand, simply by straightening the finger or opening the hand, great care must be taken to avoid any exaggerated movement. The fingers must fall on the keys and not strike them ; moreover when they play in succession they should glide, so to speak, from one key to the other : all of which should warn you of the gentleness you must observe at the beginning. »

And again, he says :

« Keep in mind that each finger must act by individual movement, and be most careful that the finger which is releasing a key shall keep so close to the latter as to appear to still be in contact with it.

« Never let any movement of your hand burden your finger-touch : on the contrary, let your hand support the fingers and thus contribute to their lightness of touch : this is most important. »

When Rameau wrote this in 1724, he had in mind the « Mechanism of the fingers » in general and naturally also the rendering of all compositions for the « Harpsichord ». And although these rules are so discreetly expressed and so moderate in their requirements, the greatest harpsichordists, up to the time of Ph. Em. Bach — and even Mozart — appear to have found them sufficient to achieve perfection in playing.

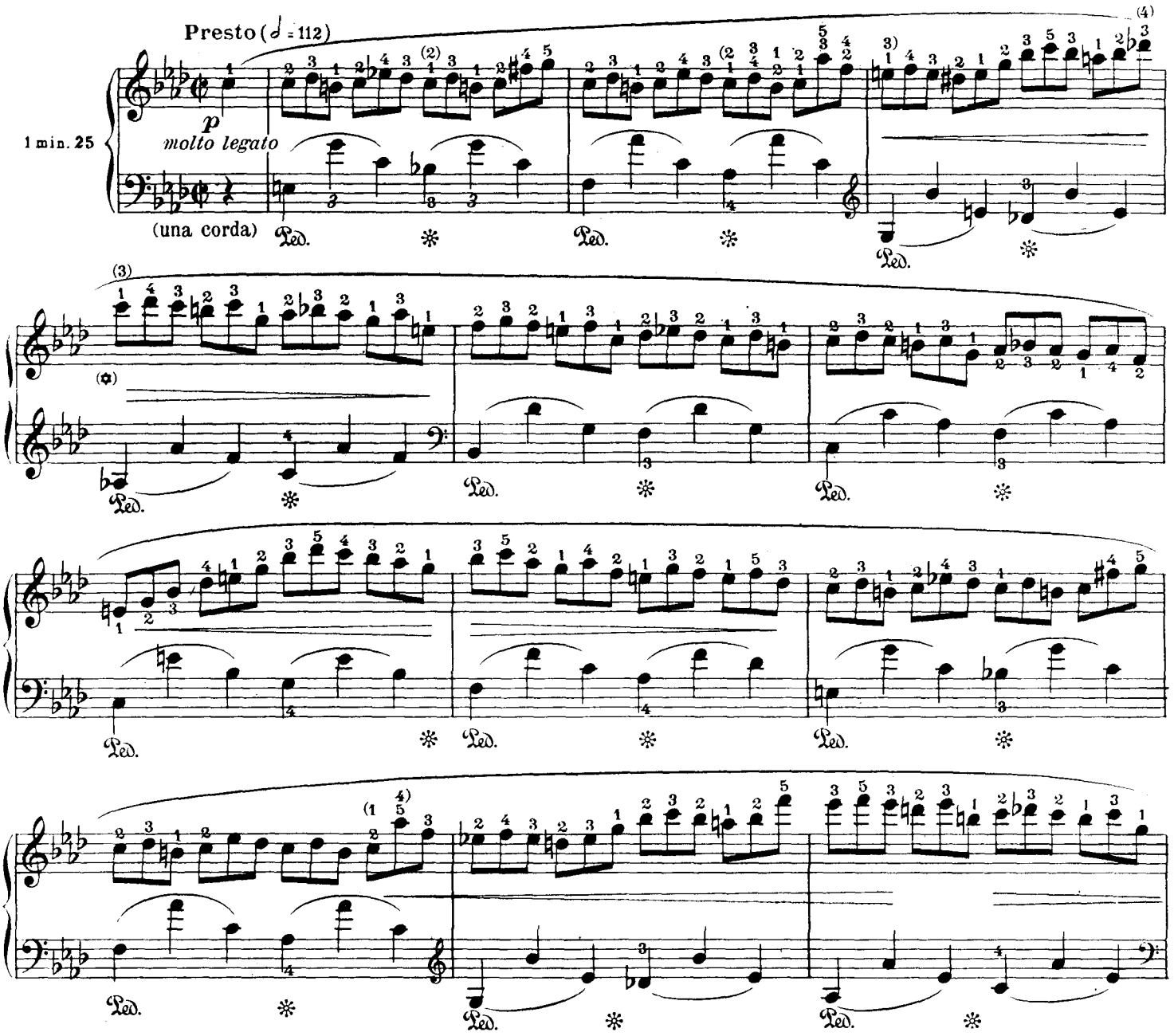
It needs the advent of the pianoforte provided with a keyboard offering greater resistance than that of the harpsichord, able as well to prolong the tone, enriched with an infinite variety of timbres — due to the possibility of striking in various ways — and to the use of pedals ; it needs also the coming of Beethoven, Weber, Chopin, Schumann and Liszt who will make the pianoforte express all emotions, who will ennoble it by making of it the instrument of enthusiasm, who will adorn it with all the paintings of imagination, and demand that it shall interpret every human feeling — all of this is needed for the technical pianistics to explode the casing in which school - traditions at any rate — if not exactly musical production — had enclosed the limited resources of tone of the XVIIIth century. Indeed this had to come for interpretation to be no more exclusively ruled by considerations of clearness, evenness and elegance, but that every kind of freedom, every kind of audacity, every means and ways of producing timbre should become lawful — with the sole reservation that the composer's thought should be faithfully interpreted.

Yet all this priceless enrichment has not been acquired without suffering some impairments. Indeed, for too long a time, Masters on the one hand — notwithstanding their loyal intentions, but somewhat intoxicated by the space opening before them — and Pupils on the other hand, in spite of being highly-gifted, thought they could either for the sake of orchestral colour, or for an outward show of feeling, or to display assets of virtuosity (not always definitely acquired) — ignore the qualities formerly considered as the essential ornaments of talent and came to look upon as accessory and subsidiary the rules which used to be the very foundation - work of keyboard-playing.

One of the most genuine achievements of modern technique will be to have realized that here lay, not only mere heedlessness, but downright error.

If we analyze the reason why compared to others, the performing of our best pianists to-day has more flavour, why their playing is more natural, their range of tone-colours richer and more delicate, we shall discover that the foundation of their technique — to which they add all the improvements due to their personal genius — are the rules plain, precise and moderate of J. Ph. Rameau.

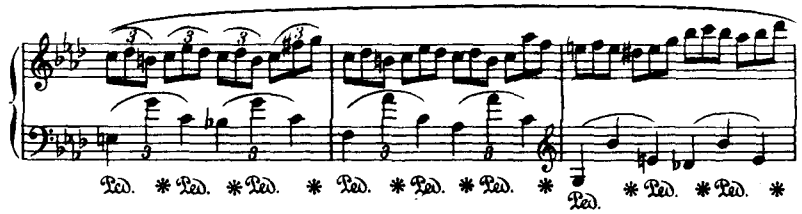
ALFRED CORTOT



. The original editions have the sustaining pedal marked as to be pressed down at the beginning of each bar and released only at the end of the bar - - except when the harmony changes.

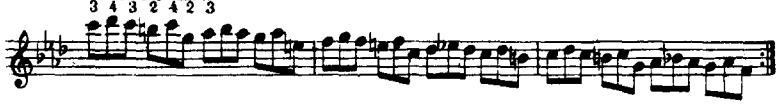
Considering the sonority of *modern instruments*, we have thought it advisable to lighten these directions.

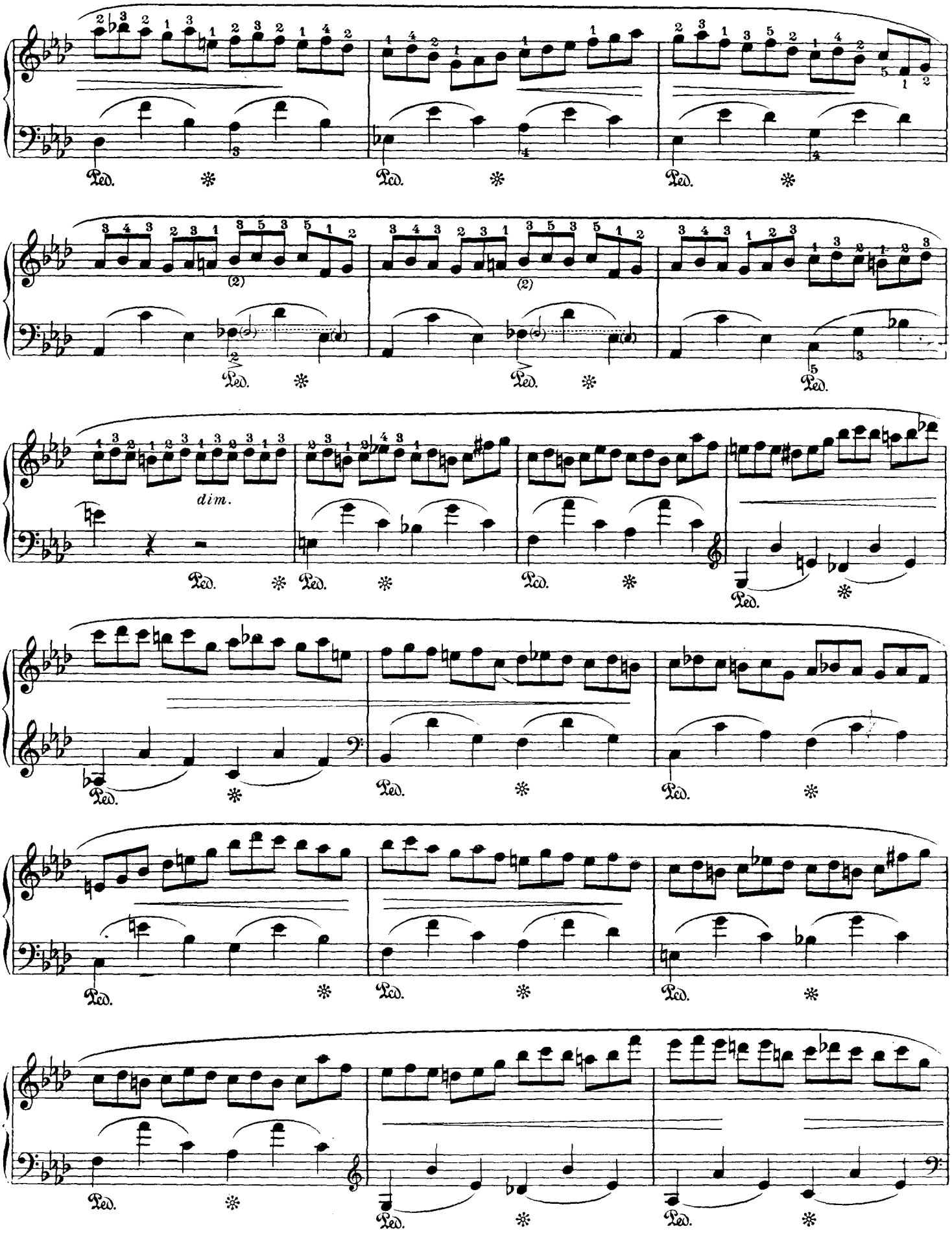
If the foot be supple enough, we recommend the following modifications :

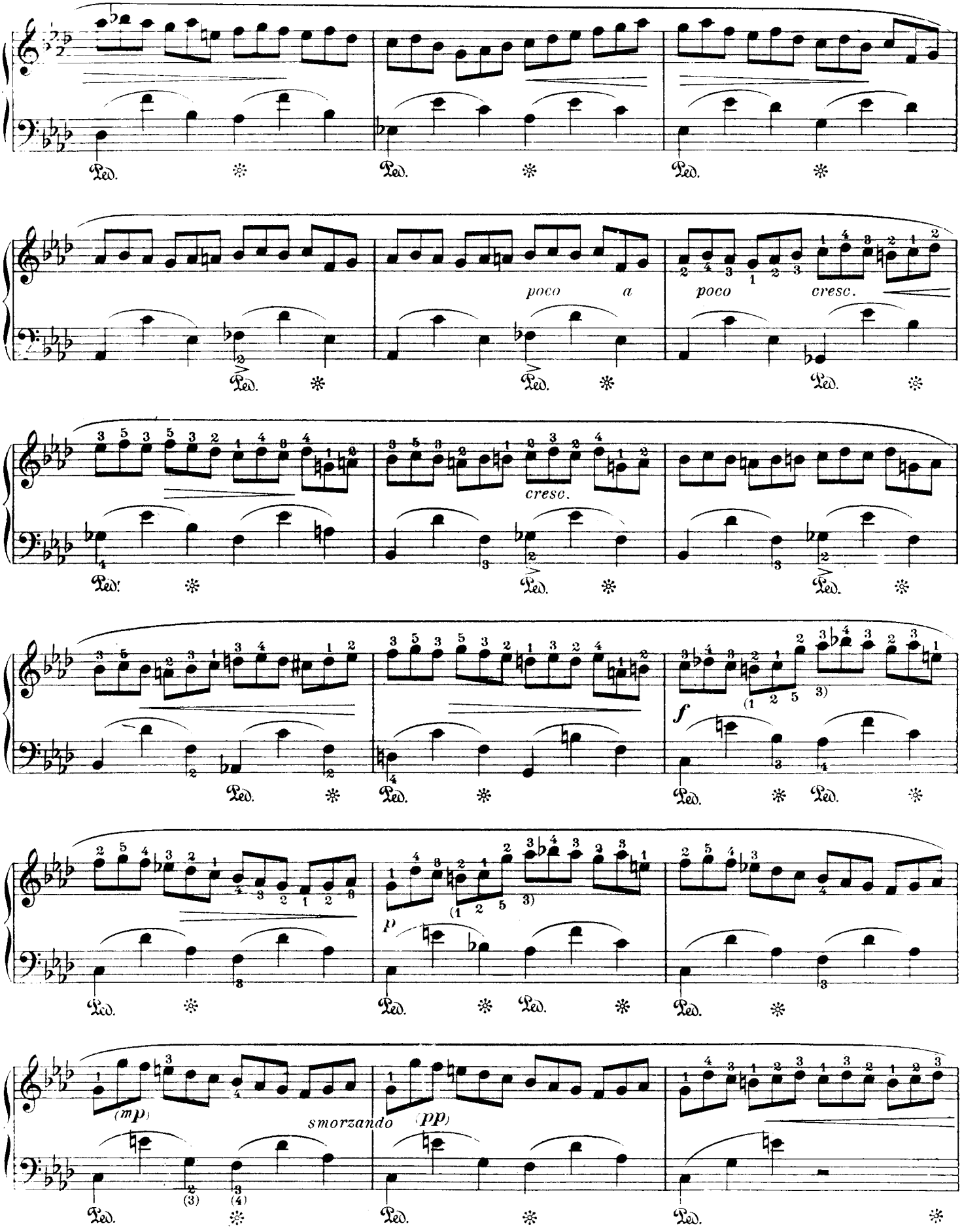


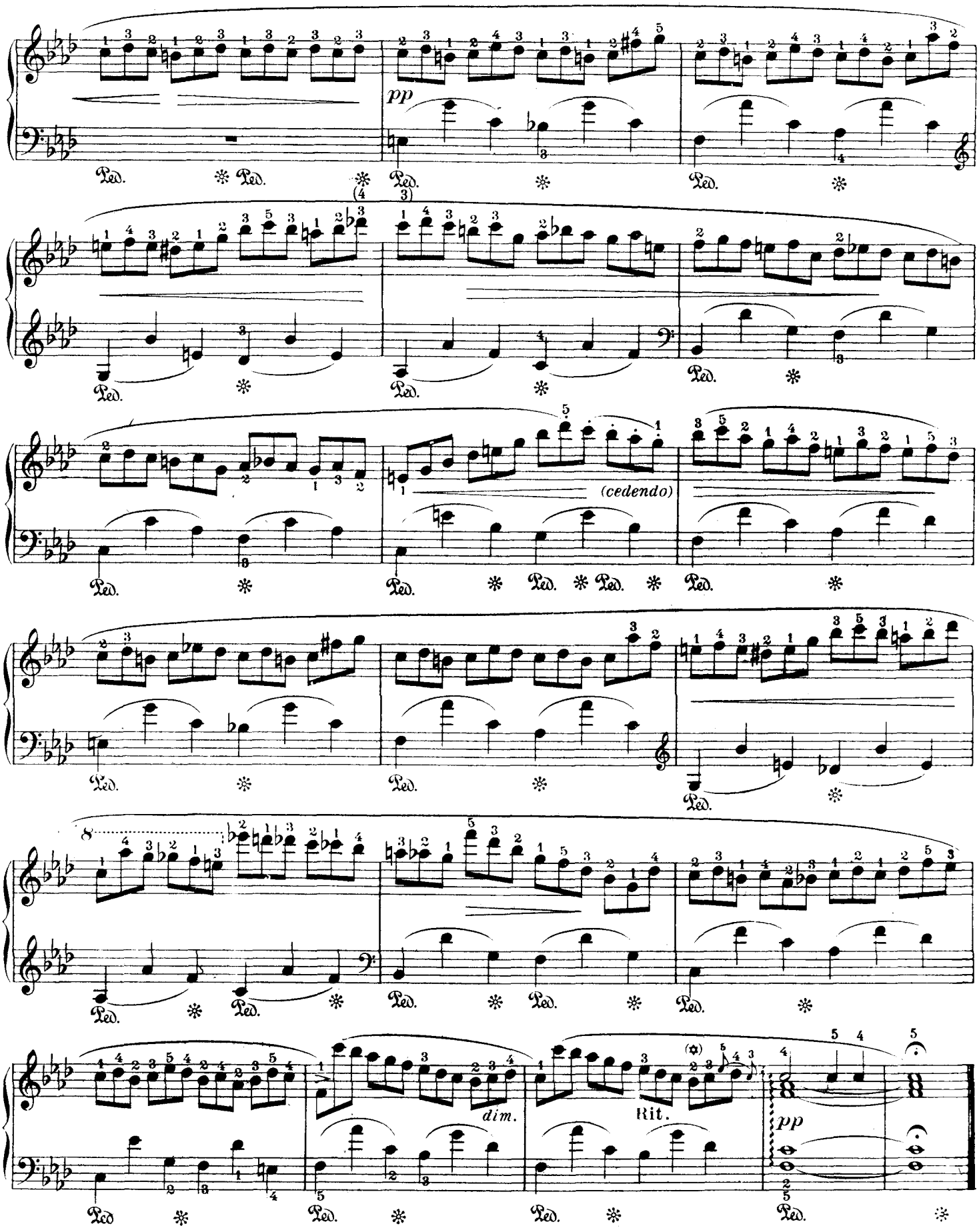
which, besides ensuring to the harmonic structure the evanescent character required for the rendering of this Study, affords at the same time excellent rhythmical practice.

(*) Practise as well the following fingerings.




Ped.
(2)
dim.


poco a
poco
cresc.
cresc.
f
p
(mp)
smorzando
(pp)

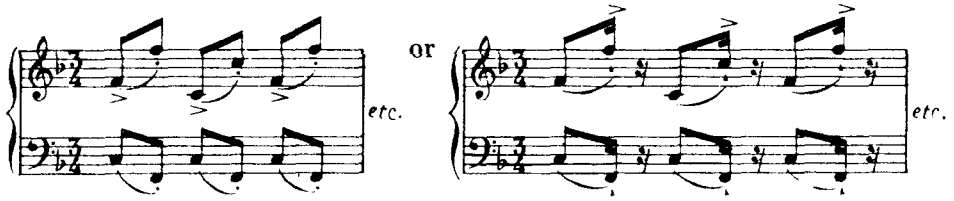


*) Execute thus :

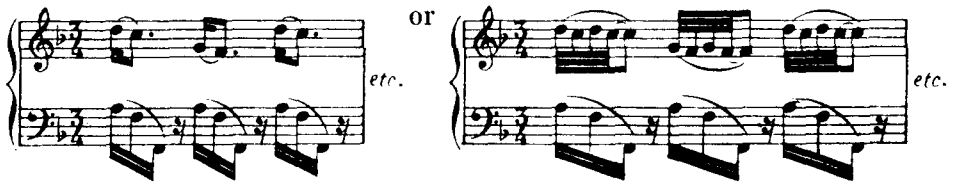
The student should concentrate on : Precision and independence of the fingers' contrary motion — Flexibility of the wrist — Evenness of tone of the thumb and the 5th finger.

From the very beginning of the practice of this Study, it is necessary to bring out the two different rhythmical elements which by their constant opposition give to this work its character, life and vivacity.

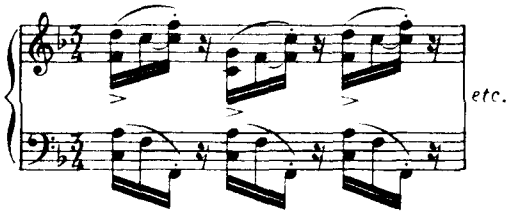
For example :



And then :

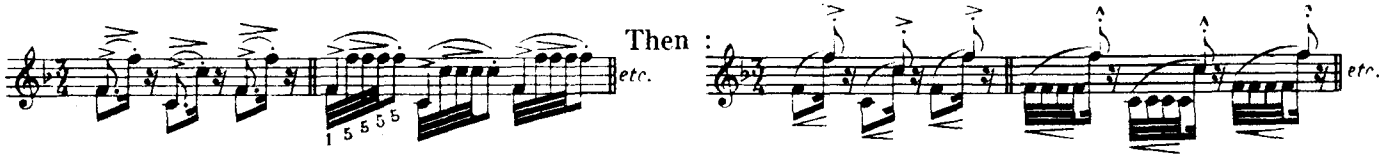


When the student has mastered the particular flexions of each of these figures, and feels he can combine them without their losing their individual timbre, he may then interpret the first 48 bars of the composition as if they were written according to the following quicker and lighter figure :



From Bar 49 onwards, the second inner note is no longer bound to the second quaver of each group as previously. Great care should be taken to observe most accurately this new rhythmical form.

First, practise the figure played by the thumb and the 5th finger of the right hand, as follows :

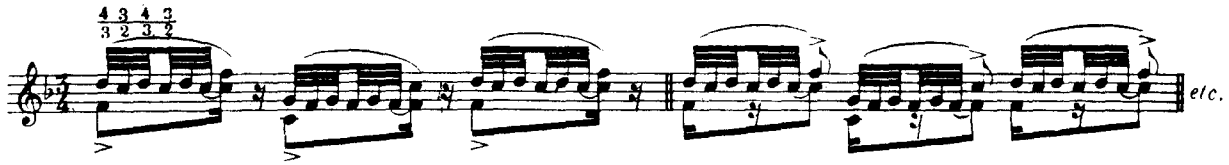


raising the hand high above the keyboard let it fall loosely on each group, using the motion of the wrist either to accent the first note with the thumb, or on the contrary to make a more forcible accent on the last note with the 5th finger.

Then, practise the semiquaver figure played by the right hand according to the following variant which can be profitaby employed throughout the Study :

Again, by raising the hand rather high before letting it fall lightly, avoid striking the first note more forcibly than the next ones. Let the fingers prepare — so to speak — the motion of the shake before actually

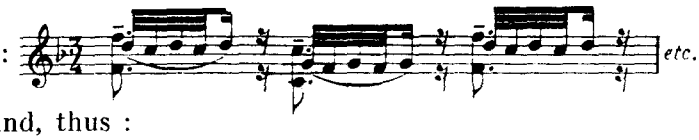
Next, practise the right hand separately combining the two figures, as follows :



Then :

(The accents with the thumb and the 5th finger should be very precise and the shake very light).

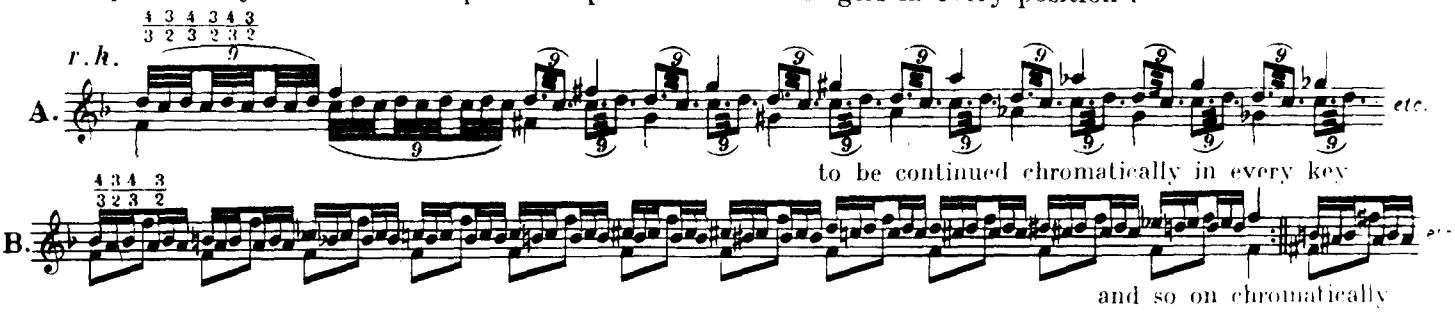
and :



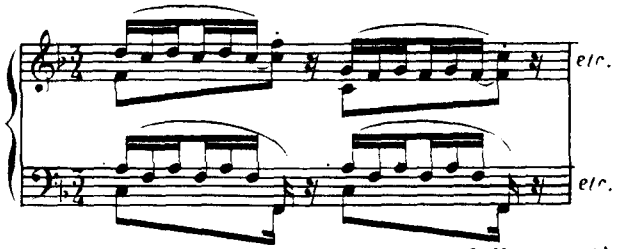
Next, practise the left hand, thus :

From Bar 29 until Bar 41, this variant will be modified thus :

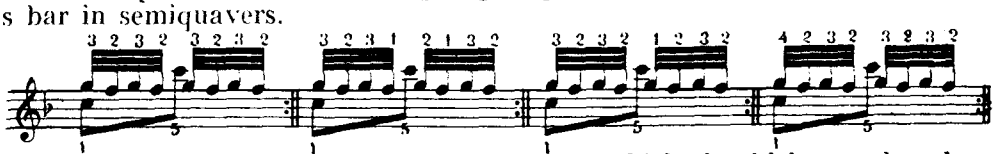
Complementary exercises to acquire independence of the fingers in every position :



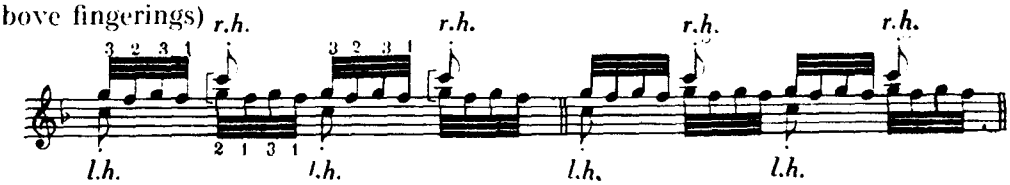
For combined playing of the two hands, we recommend practising the following variant throughout :



For the 5th bar from the last — and once the student has carefully practised the four above-mentioned formulae — he should adopt out of the following fingerings the one best suited to obtain an even and light execution of this bar in semiquavers.



We give hereunder two easier variants of this same bar (which should be employed only after having practised the above fingerings)



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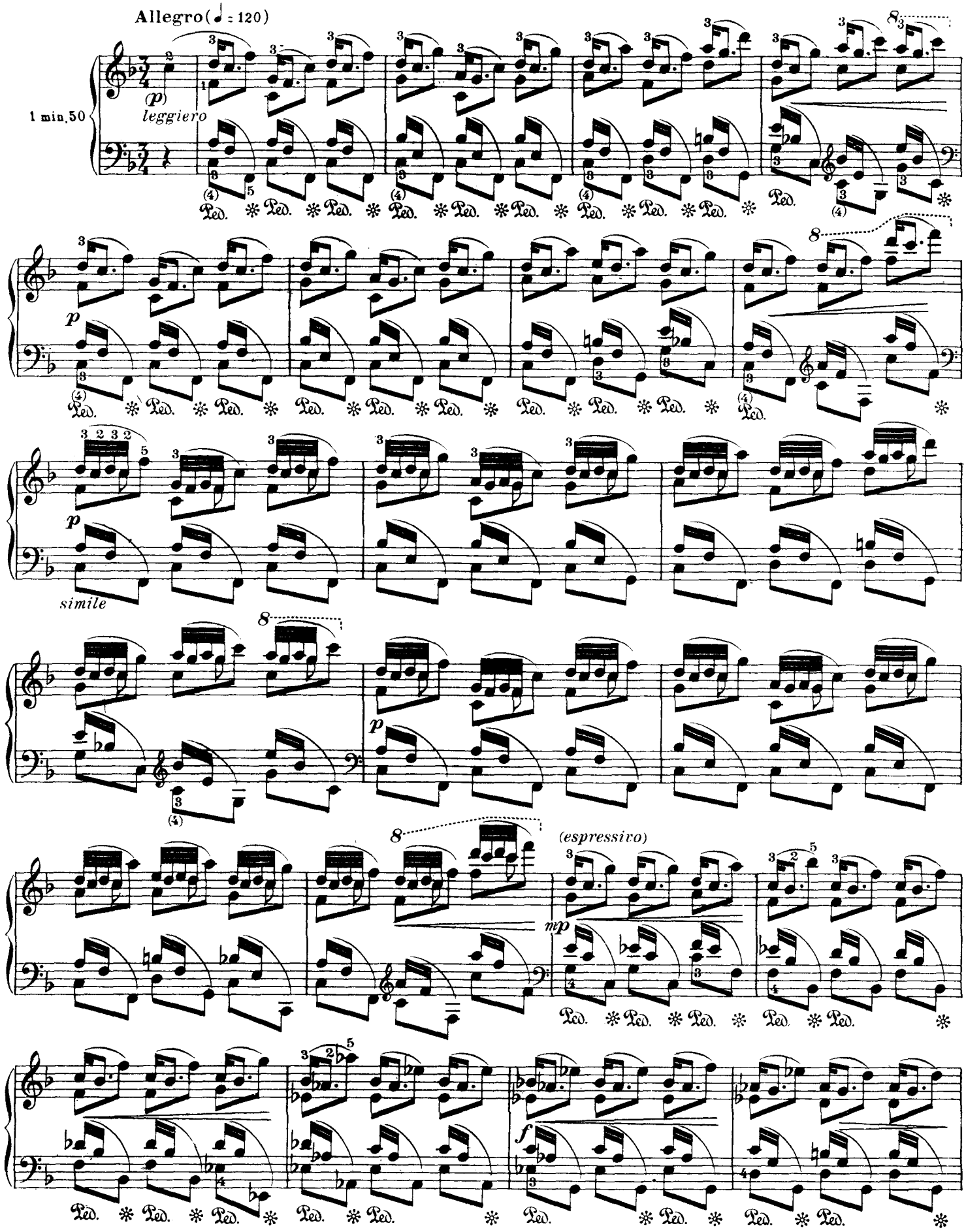
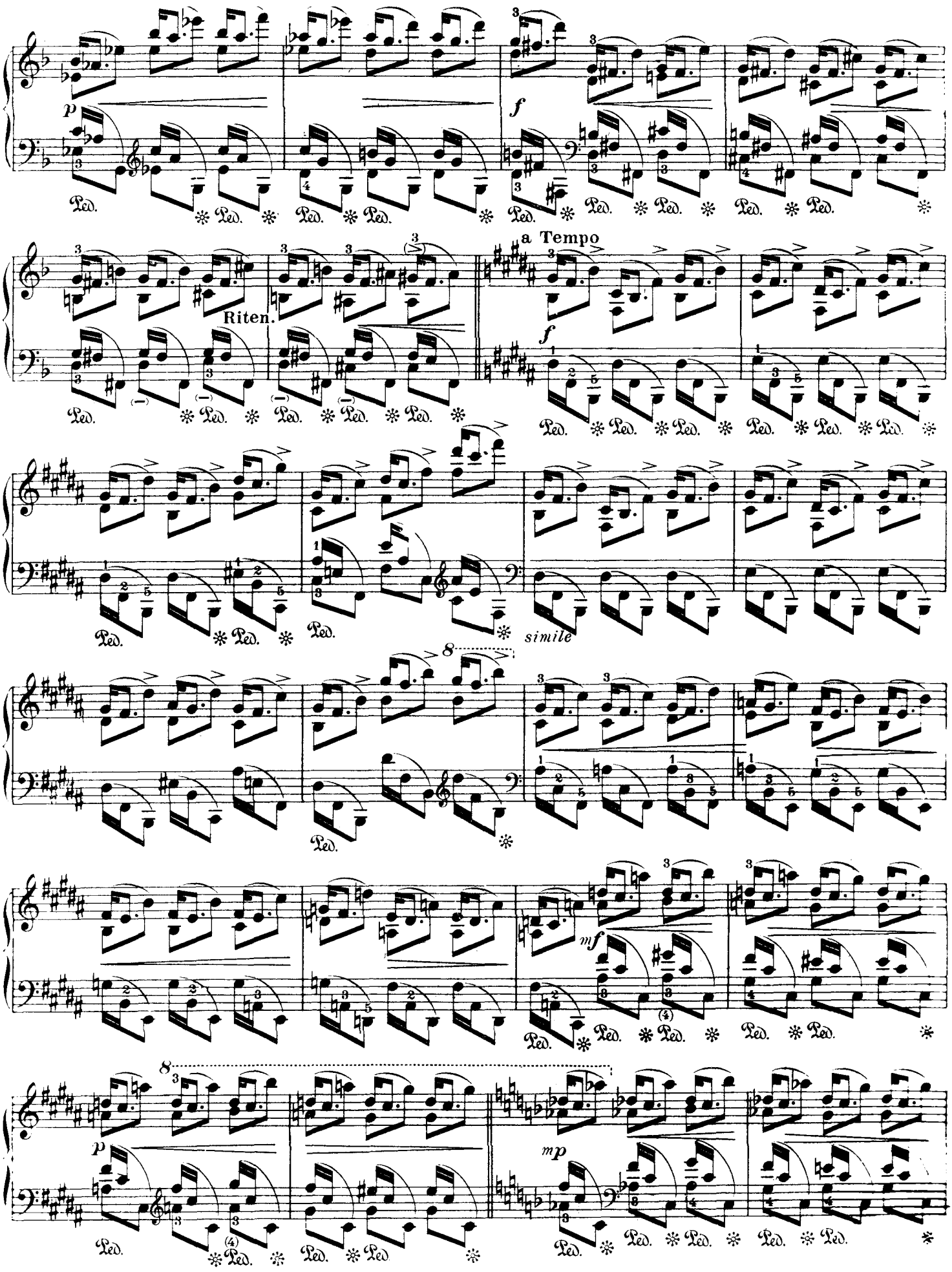
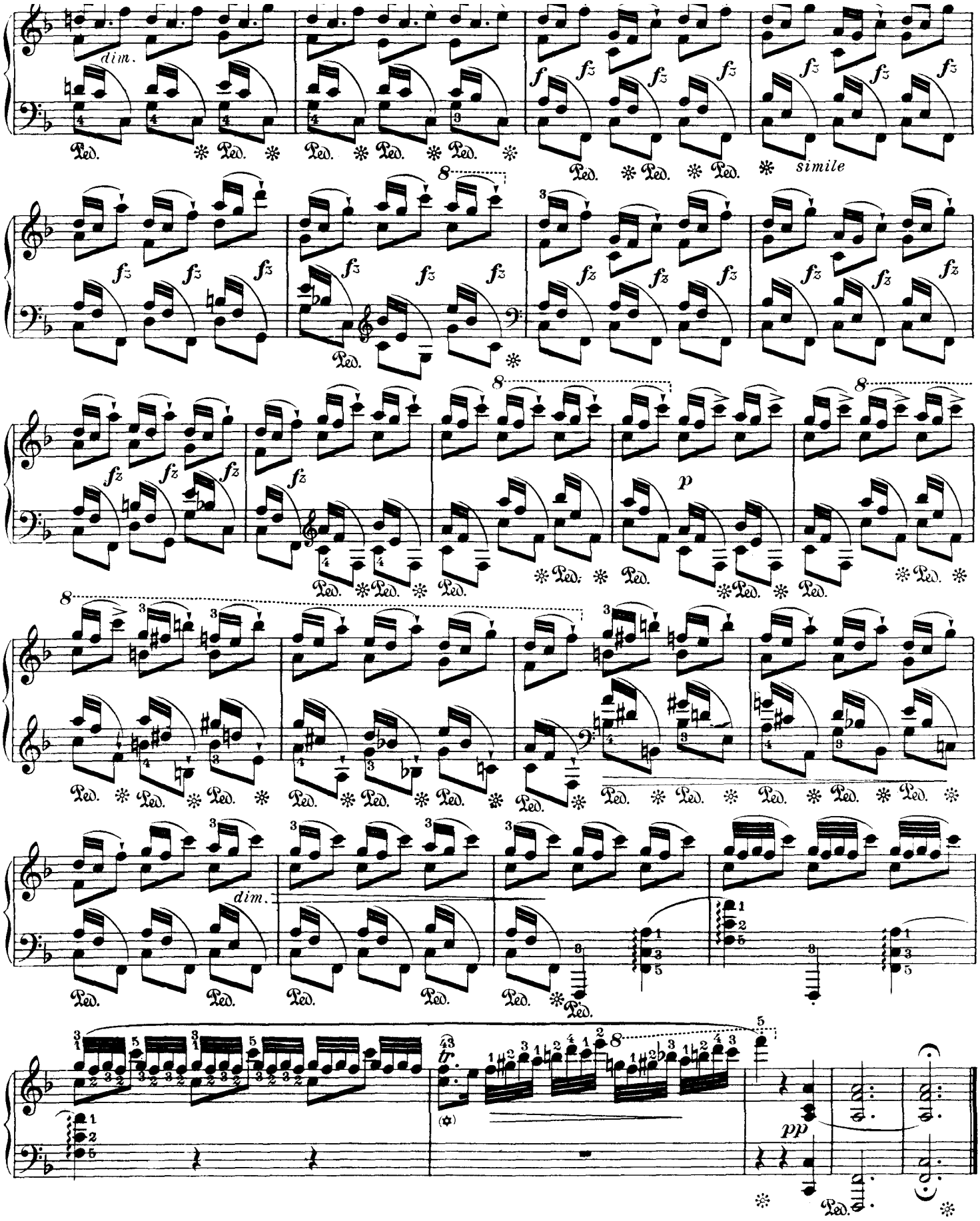

Allegro (♩ = 120)
1 min. 50
(p)
leggiero
p
simile
(espressivo)
mp
f


p
f
Riten.
a Tempo
f
simile
8
mf
8
p
mp



(*) Execute thus : etc.

STUDY N° 4

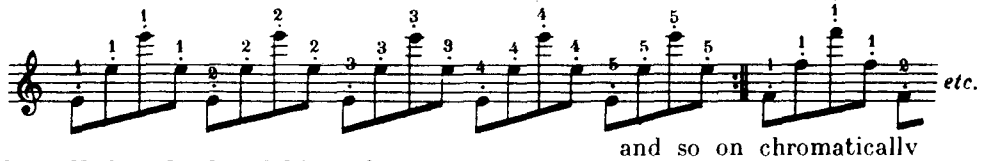
(Op. 25)

In spite of the fact that this Study appears to offer no variety from the technical point of view, the student will find that it affords him many opportunites to further his progress in pianistics if he considers the diversity of its expressive and rhythmical details, the variety of tone to be rendered, the staccato played alternately by finger or wrist movements, and the « portamento » and legato playing which sometimes alternate and at other times are simultaneous.

First, take separately each individual difficult touch, then, by amplifying these difficulties, and even exaggerating them, thus convert them into exercises which may appear irrelevant to this work but which will ultimately ensure a perfect rendering of the composition, far better than numerous repetitions of Chopin's text.

Thus, we will first take the light, terse, incisive and almost-pizzicato tone which is suitable for the chords played by the right hand during the eight opening bars of the piece. In order to achieve this particular tone, we will analyse and perfect the movement of the wrist and the action of the fingers by means of the following exercises :

A.

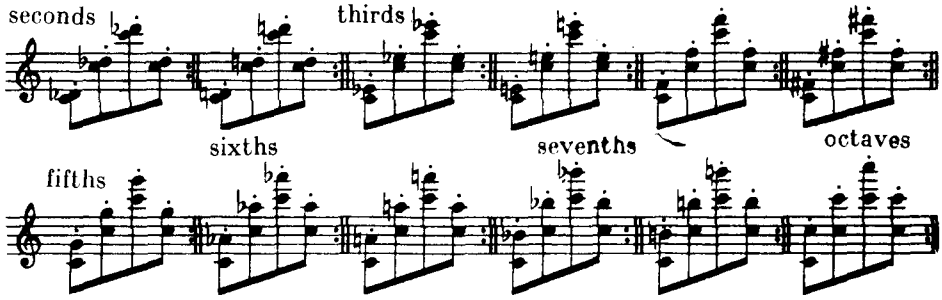


and so on chromatically

Practise *f* and *p*. Raise the hand high above the keyboard and attack with decision, release the key immediately so as to bring the hand back to its former position. Avoid any movement of the finger; on the contrary, keep it rather stiffly curved, in contrast with the wrist which should remain extremely supple.

Then, practise according to the above figure, transposing them into every key, the figures in two-note chords, as follows :

B.



Employ successively the following fingerings :

Seconds and thirds :

2	3	4	5	3	4	5	4	5	5
1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	4

Fourths :

2	3	4	5	4	5		5
1	1	1	1	2	2		3

Fifths, sixths and sevenths :

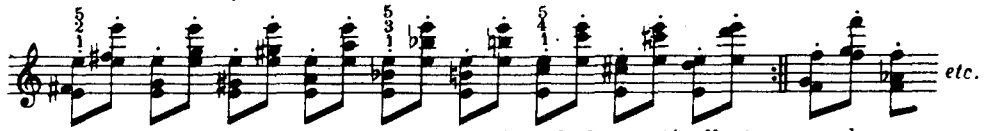
	3	4	5	5
	1	1	1	2

Octaves :

	4	5
	1	1

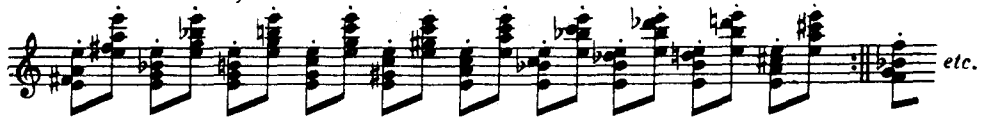
Next, play the three-note chords, as follows :

C.



And further, the four-note chords, thus : to be continued chromatically in every key

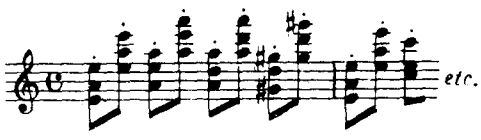
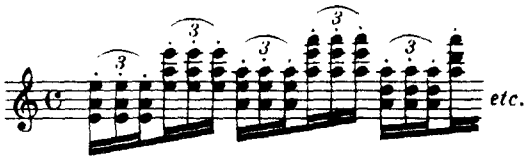
D.



It stands to reason that these formulae may be practised in a number of various forms by modifying the position of the chords. However, the manner of practising never varies in its principles throughout the exercices, i.e., : the fingers should strictly prepare the position of each chord before striking it and both the fingers and the hand should be kept firm, both when playing and between the chords; the wrist and the forearm, on the contrary, must remain most flexible while striking and while shifting the hand from one chord to the next.

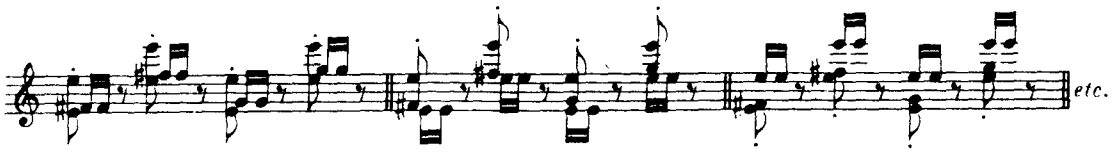
Be very careful to ensure equal force of the fingers : also see that they should press down the keys and

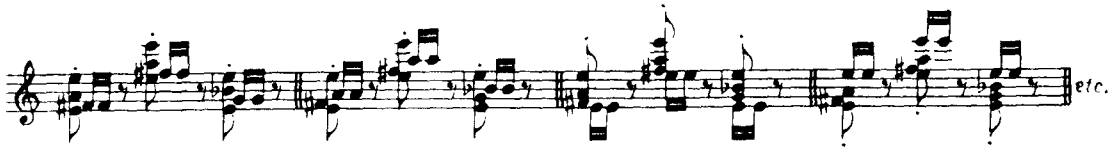
To conclude these staccato exercises, we advise playing the right hand of the Study several times throughout employing the following variants :

1.  etc. 2.  etc.

Accent variant N° 2 as follows :

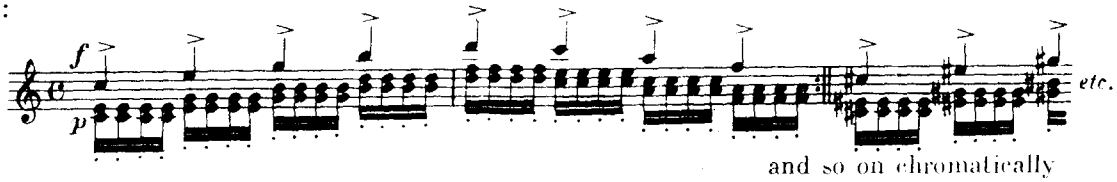
In order to prepare the transition from the strictly staccato playing to the combined legato and staccato played by the same hand which will be our further object in the analysis of this composition, exercises **C** and **D** should be practised with the following modification of rhythms :

C 

D 

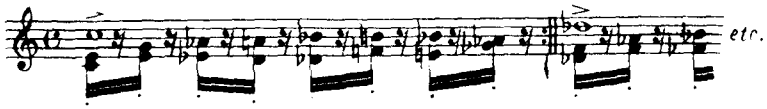
Be very careful to raise the fingers neatly before attacking the semiquavers which should be played with the fingers *only;* the quavers should be played as strictly detached as in the foregoing exercises.

Further, for firmness of attack of the 5th finger and for neatness of movement of the finger-staccato, practise thus :

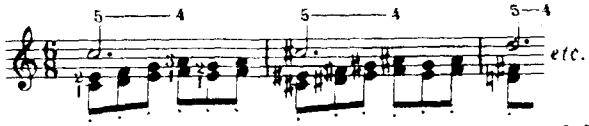


and so on chromatically

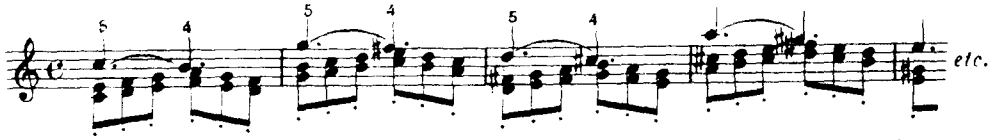
Next, changing the chord-position and in order to ensure the firmness of the note held by the 5th finger, thus :



Then, employing substitution of the fingers for the held notes :

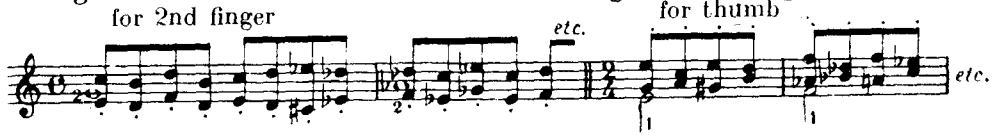


And, finally, to bind and make even the successive attacks of the 4th and 5th fingers :



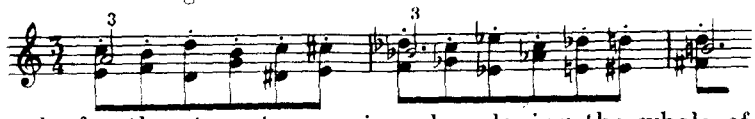
Although the 4tn and 5th fingers are the only ones to play the expressive and melodic part in this Study, we recommend practising these same exercises with the other fingers of the right hand, thus :

for 2nd finger



for thumb

for 3rd finger



And, as he did previously for the staccato-exercises, by playing the whole of the right hand part in detached notes, the student should complete the work of combining staccato and legato in the one hand by the three following variants :

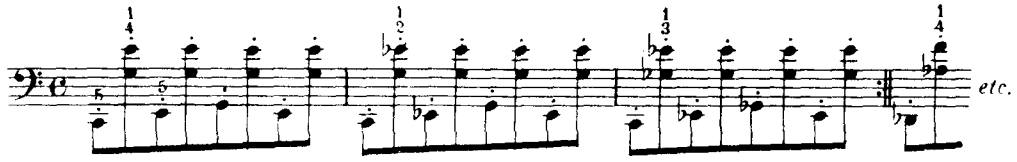
holding of the lower note. holding of the inner note. holding of the upper note.

For the whole part of the Study in which held notes and finger staccato are combined, the student should, in spite of the differences of technique, contrive to impart to the detached notes the same tone as that of the chords of the opening eight bars of the piece. He will obtain this result by striking the keys with a quick and decided motion even when playing *piano*, and by swiftly drawing back the fingers so that they should immediately be in the proper position to play the next chord ; meanwhile, the weight of the hand and wrist should bear entirely on the finger which is playing the held note.

Some few bars of the Study require to be rendered by a staccato « louré » to practise which needs no particular formula. For their execution, it will prove advisable to follow these few principles : instead of keeping the hand and the fingers firm during and after attacking, as previouly explained for staccato playing, one should on the contrary slightly relax the fingers at the exact moment of pressing down the keys and substitute for the quick rebound of the fingers or the wrist a light weight of the forearm, increasing it more or less according to the nuance. The right hand part should be practised throughout in this manner (1).

Having thus analysed the difficulties relating to touch for the right hand, the student should now turn his attention to the left hand : the mechanism of this work is less complicated, if not any the easier.

First of all, practise the exercises hereunder in every key, and strike the quavers with the hand raised as high as possible :



When performing, the bass note should always be slightly more emphasized than the following chord so as to ensure the rhythmical frame of the piece — which might be altered by accenting forcibly the weaker beats that support the melodic outline of the right hand — and for the harmonic successions to retain perfect clearness.

Therefore, we recommend playing this bass note with a rhythmic repetition in order to strengthen the action of the finger which plays this note, and playing all the chords in octaves in order to improve the suppleness, independence and firmness of the wrist-movements, thus :

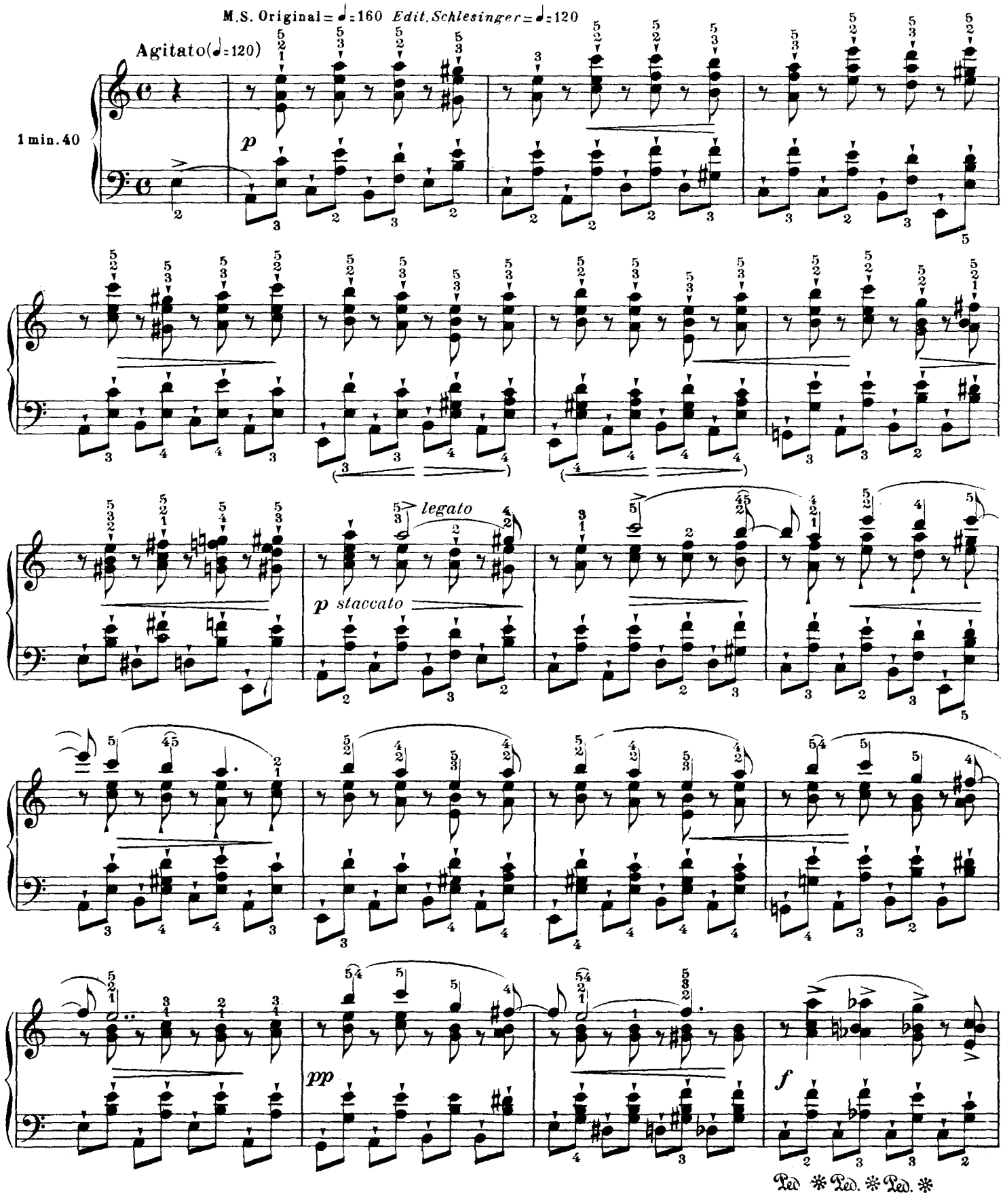
Practise further, attacking with hand raised high, alternately ***f*** and ***p***, as follows :

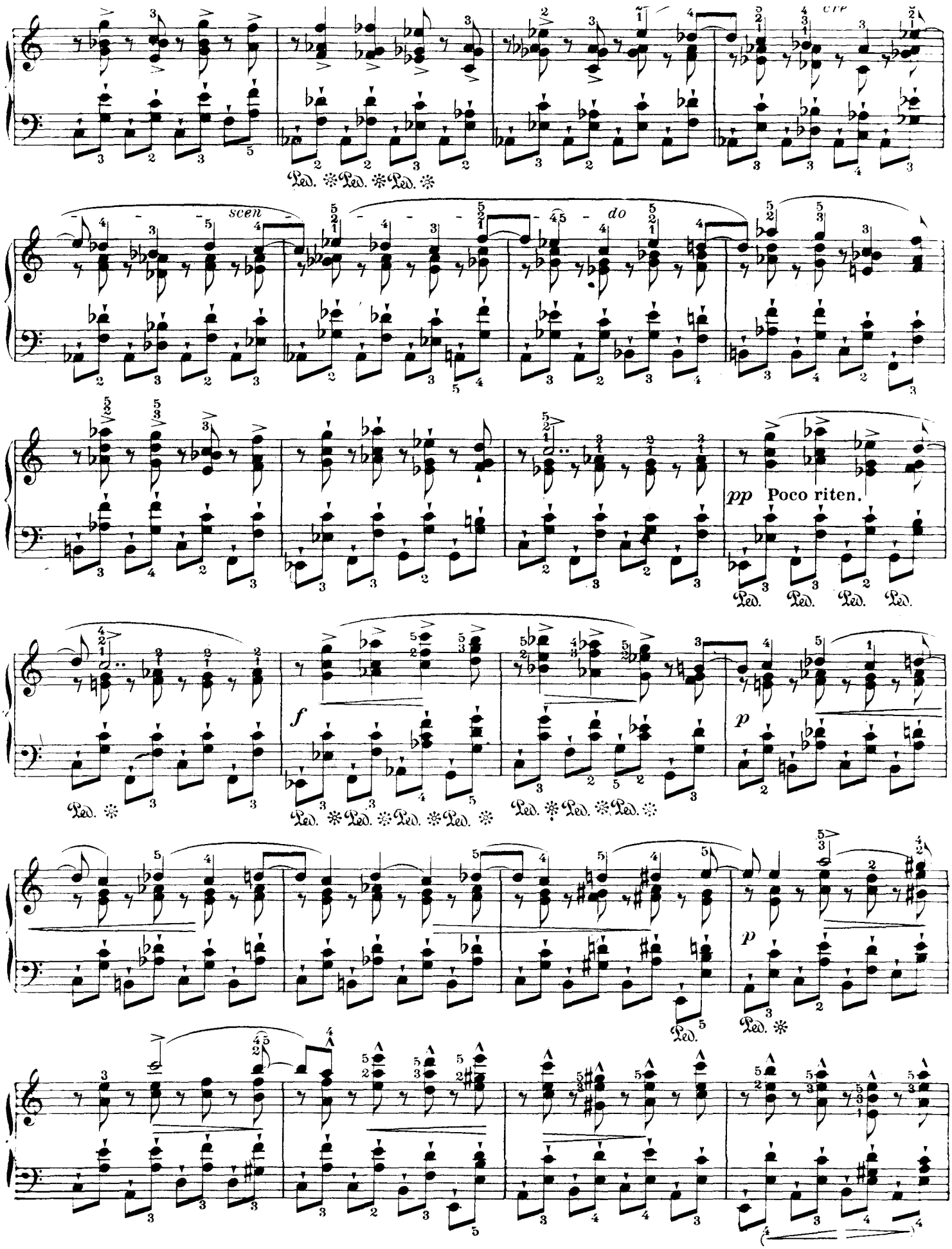
Finally, practise the left hand part as it is written in the text, in fragments connected gradually into longer and longer passages, and gradually quickening the tempo up to *presto*, so as to conquer progressively the strain which may ensue from repeated wrist-movements.

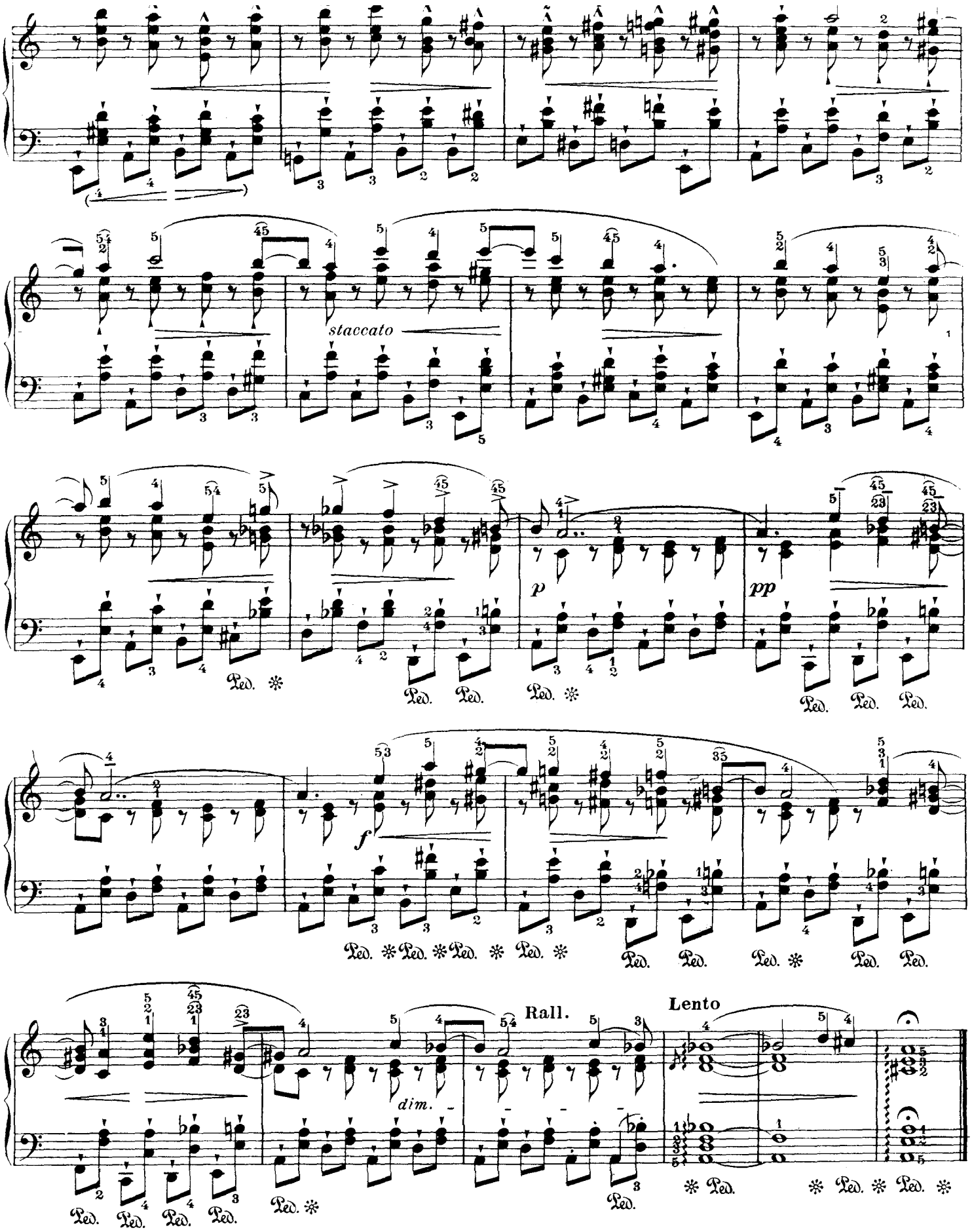
ALFRED CORTOT

STUDY N° 4

(Op. 25)




cre
Ped. Ped. Ped.
scen
do
pp Poco riten.
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.
f
p
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.
p
Ped. Ped. Ped.


staccato
p
pp
f
dim.
Rall.
Lento
Ped.

STUDY N° 5

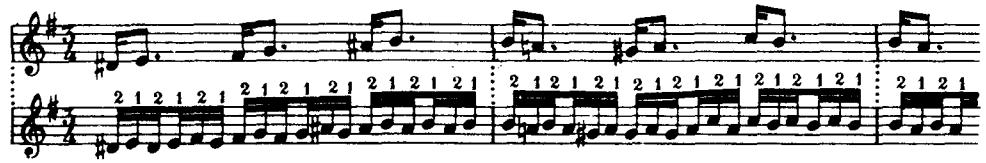
(Op. 25)

The object of this lesson is to analyse the differences of timbre and finger-touch which constitute for this Study, as they did for the previous one, the most important obstacles to overcome. However, before coming to this, the student should first of all acquire mobility and lightness of the thumb and 2nd finger of the right hand, and he should get accustomed at the same time to using the thumb continually as a pivot for shifting the hand.

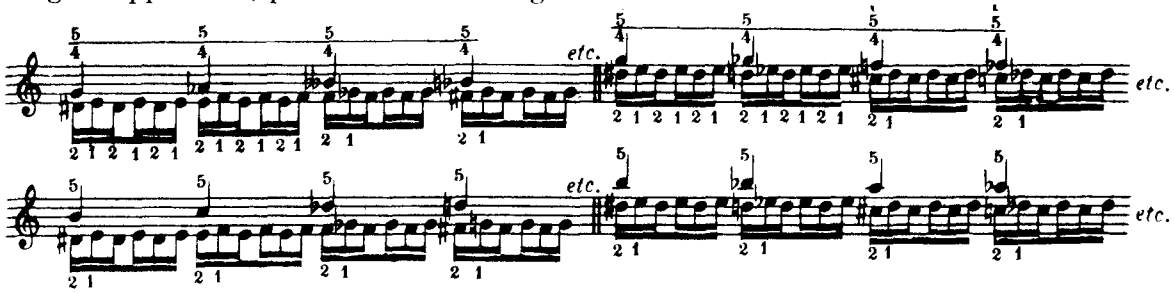
Accordingly, first, from Bar 1 to 41 and from Bar 99 to 124, the student should practise the variant hereunder which may be applied throughout to the part played by the thumb and the 2nd finger of the right hand.

Chopin's text

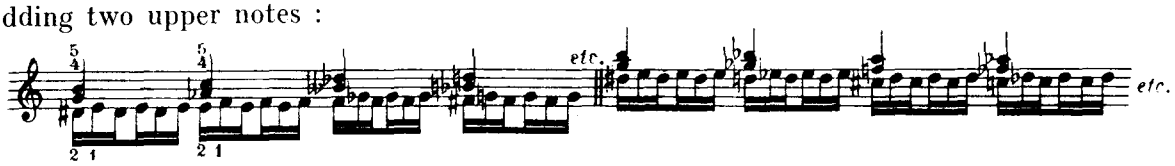
Variant



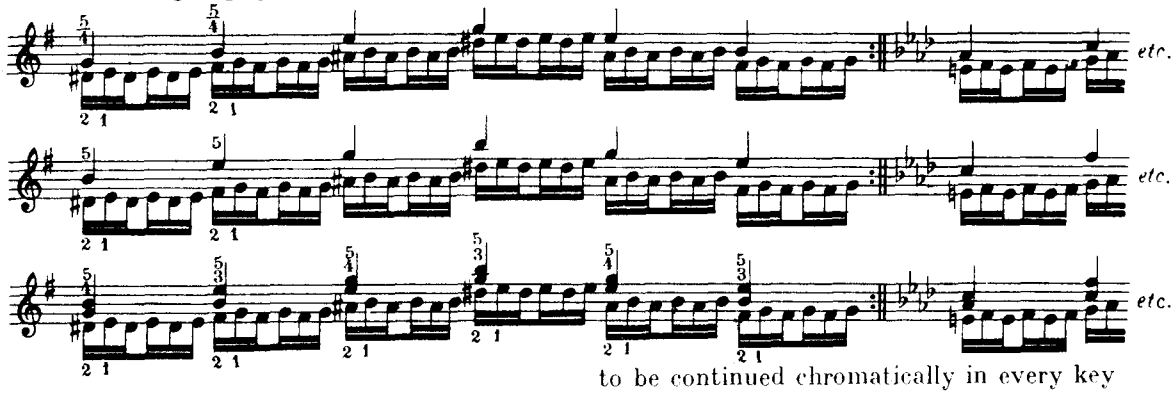
Then, adding an upper note, practise the following chromatic scales :



Next, adding two upper notes :



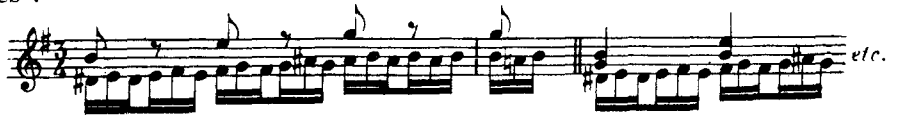
Further, the following arpeggio-formulae :



to be continued chromatically in every key

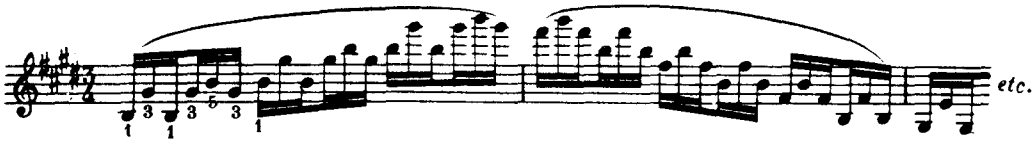
Apply to the foregoing formulae, the following rhythmical variants :

Then, going back to the variant first mentioned, practise the same bars again, this time adding the upper note — or notes :

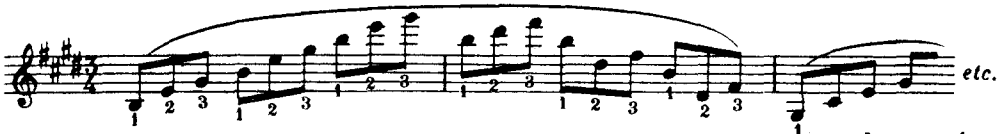


The upper note, or notes should be practised alternately held and detached.

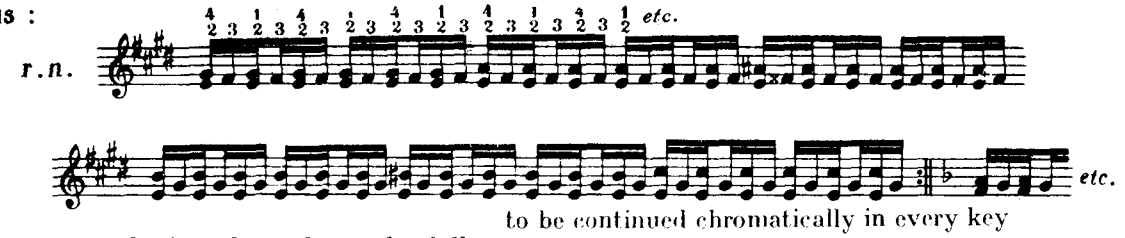
For the middle passage in E major, and in order to ensure a perfect succession of the different positions, we recommend practising thus :



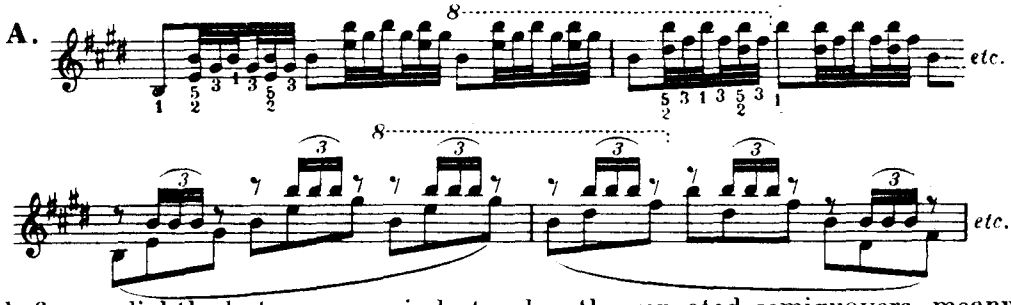
Next, practise only the lower part of the arpeggios :



Further, in order to develop evenness of finger-movement and also to prepare the passing under of the thumb, thus :

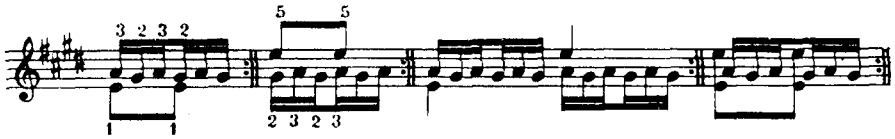


And, finally, employing throughout the following variants :



Raise the 5th finger slightly but very precisely to play the repeated semiquavers, meanwhile carefully observing a perfect legato of the lower fingers.

For preliminary practice of the trill covering the four bars at the end of the Study, use the following formulae :



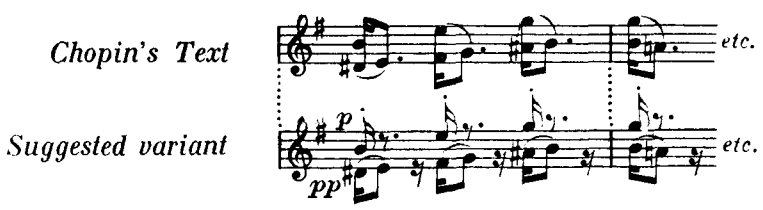
When the student has overcome the purely mechanical difficulties of this Study, he should endeavour to bring out every detail of rhythm or tone.

We are however faced here with a problem of interpretation and of natural gifts — which is more than a problem of technique proper — and to analyse which mere words can hardly be expected to compete with enlightening demonstration on the pianoforte itself.

Each slightest modification in the writing or punctuation of the original design should be rendered by a different process of attack, but these differences are most subtle and the various manners of achievement so closely dependent on the kind of instrument used that only the performer himself is in a position to grade the intensity of such subtle finger-touch.

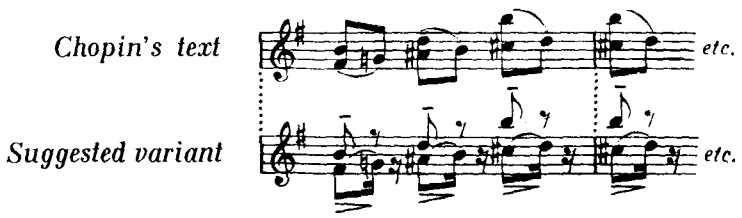
We shall therefore limit ourselves to the following examples of notation which, by exaggerating the accents of Chopin's text, give a summary differenciation of the various expositions of the theme in E minor at the beginning and at the end of this Study.

Bars 1 to 20 or 99 to 110



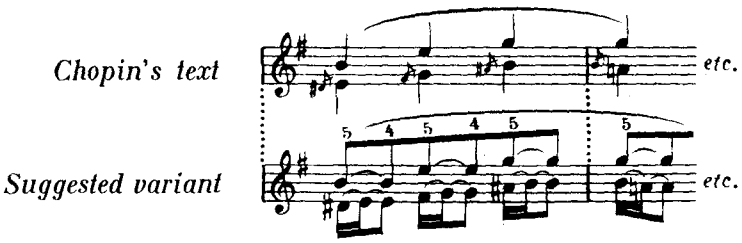
Be careful to detach the upper note neatly by an incisive movement of the finger.

Bars 21 to 29 or 111 to 114



The two-beat rhythm is obtained by lifting the hand with a light and supple motion.
The upper note should be pressed down rather than struck.

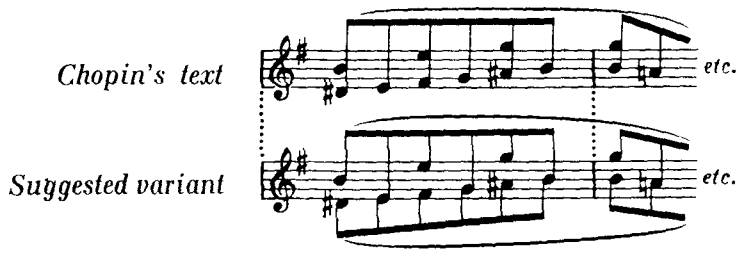
Bars 30 to 37



It seems to us in accordance with Chopin's thought to play the appogiatura simultaneously with the upper note. If the conformation of the hand permits, one should substitute the 4th finger to the 5th, when playing up the keyboard, as this way of playing ensures perfect legato of the phrase which becomes here tenderly expressive; in the case when the substitution proves impossible, use the 5th finger throughout.

Only a very great flexiblility of the wrist will permit of achieving the penetrating tone required by the two parts : a slight predominance should however be reserved to the upper voice.

Bars 38 to 42



Full attention should be given to ensuring evenness of tone to the quavers without however emphasizing the upper note, and to playing perfectly legato throughout with the fingers gently curved and never leaving the keyboard.

We think it uncalled for to point out that the light and vivacious character which prevails at the beginning and at the end of this composition should in no way be affected by the above-mentioned modifications of touch. The latter are but very delicate tints of colouring; they should not influence the general mood of these pages which Chopin indicated as « Scherzando ».

In complete opposition, the middle passage in E major with its penetrating and colourful atmosphere of sound and its poetical and expressive ardour being — as it were — expressed with greater freedom in marked contrast with the alert and precise figure that precedes and follows it.

For the preliminary practice of the left hand in this passage, we refer the student to the analysis of Study N° 6 Op. 10 (see paragraph relating to execution of upper part) and to that of Study N° 7 Op. 25.

The student should endeavour to achieve a perfectly even and blended tone for the accompanying design played by the right hand; indeed its harmonies should wind about the melodic line like a transparent veil.

Avoid raising the fingers, let them keep throughout in close contact with the keyboard; also, aid the passing under of the thumb and the shifting of the hand by observing a constant flexibility of the wrist.

ALFRED CORTOT

STUDY N° 5

(Op. 25)

Vivace(♩ = 184)

leggiero

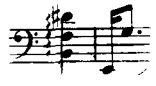
p scherzando

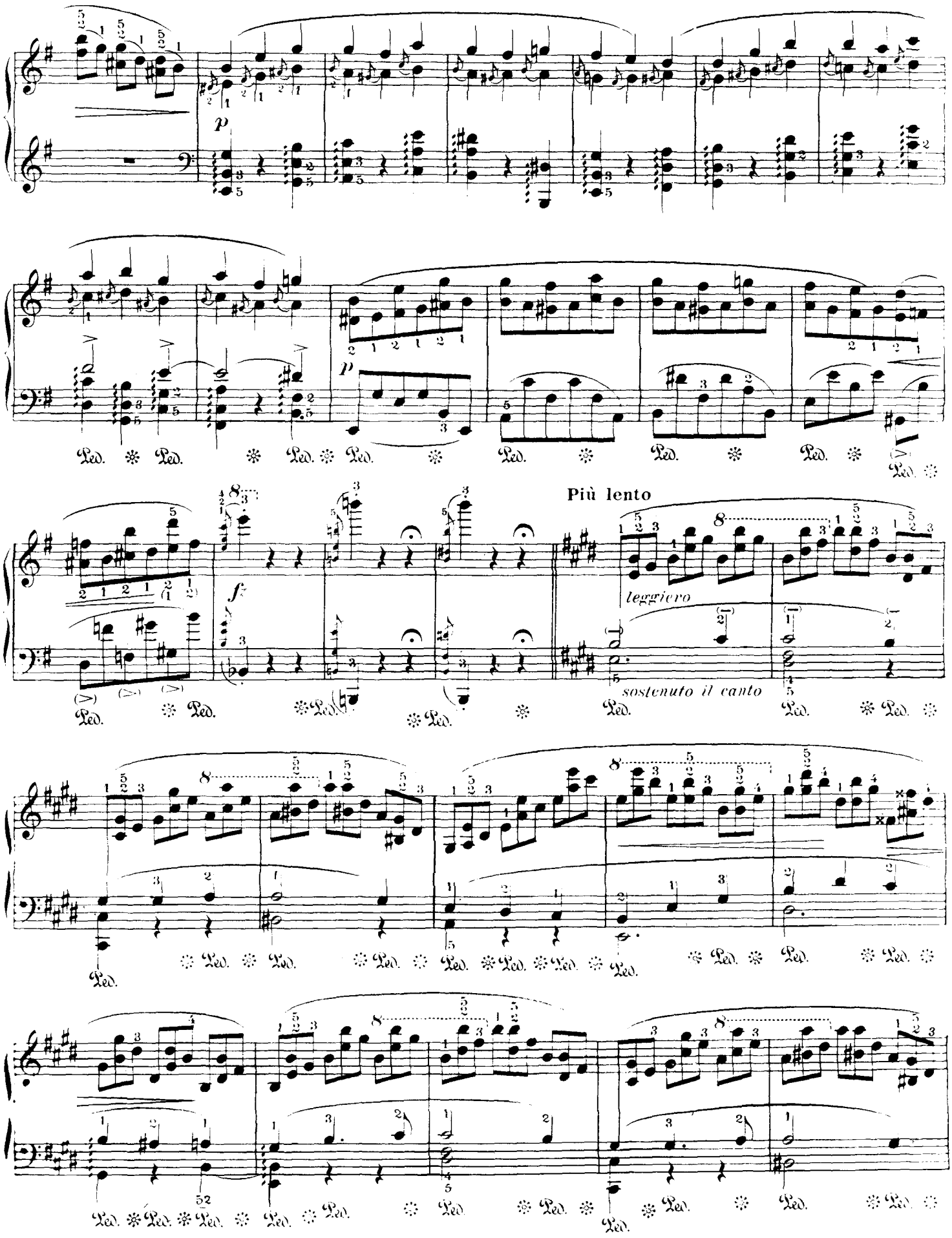
2 min. 45

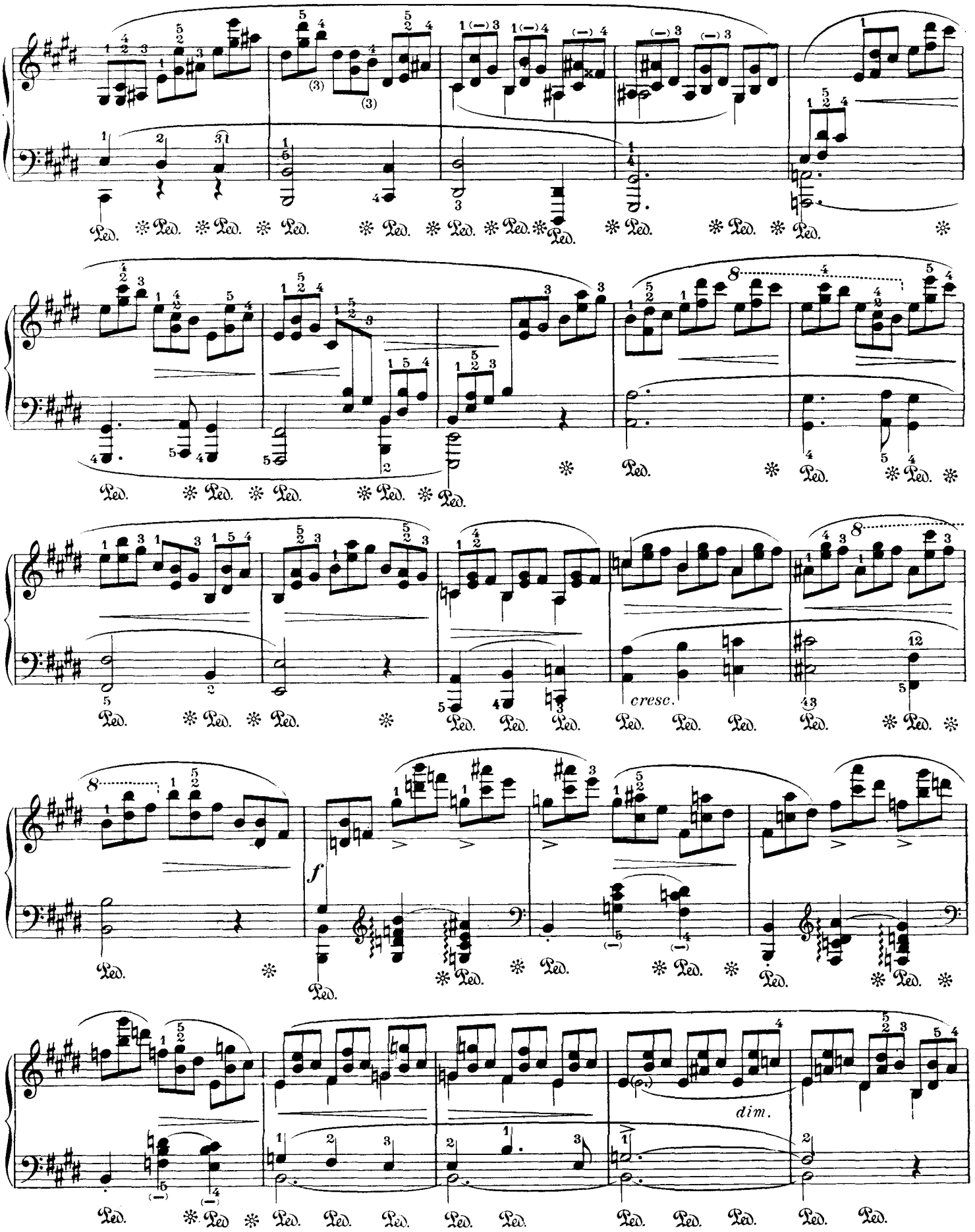
dolce

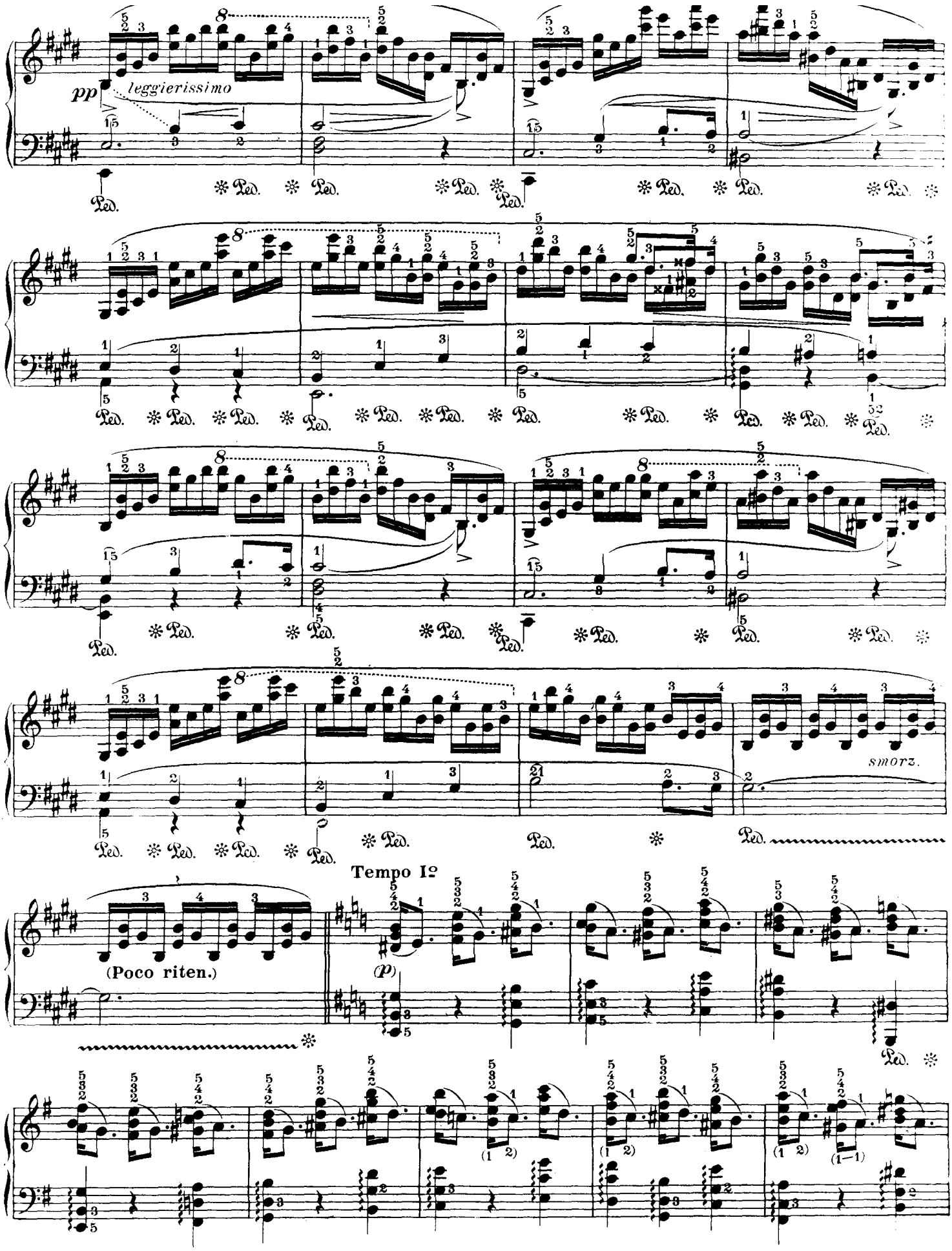
f

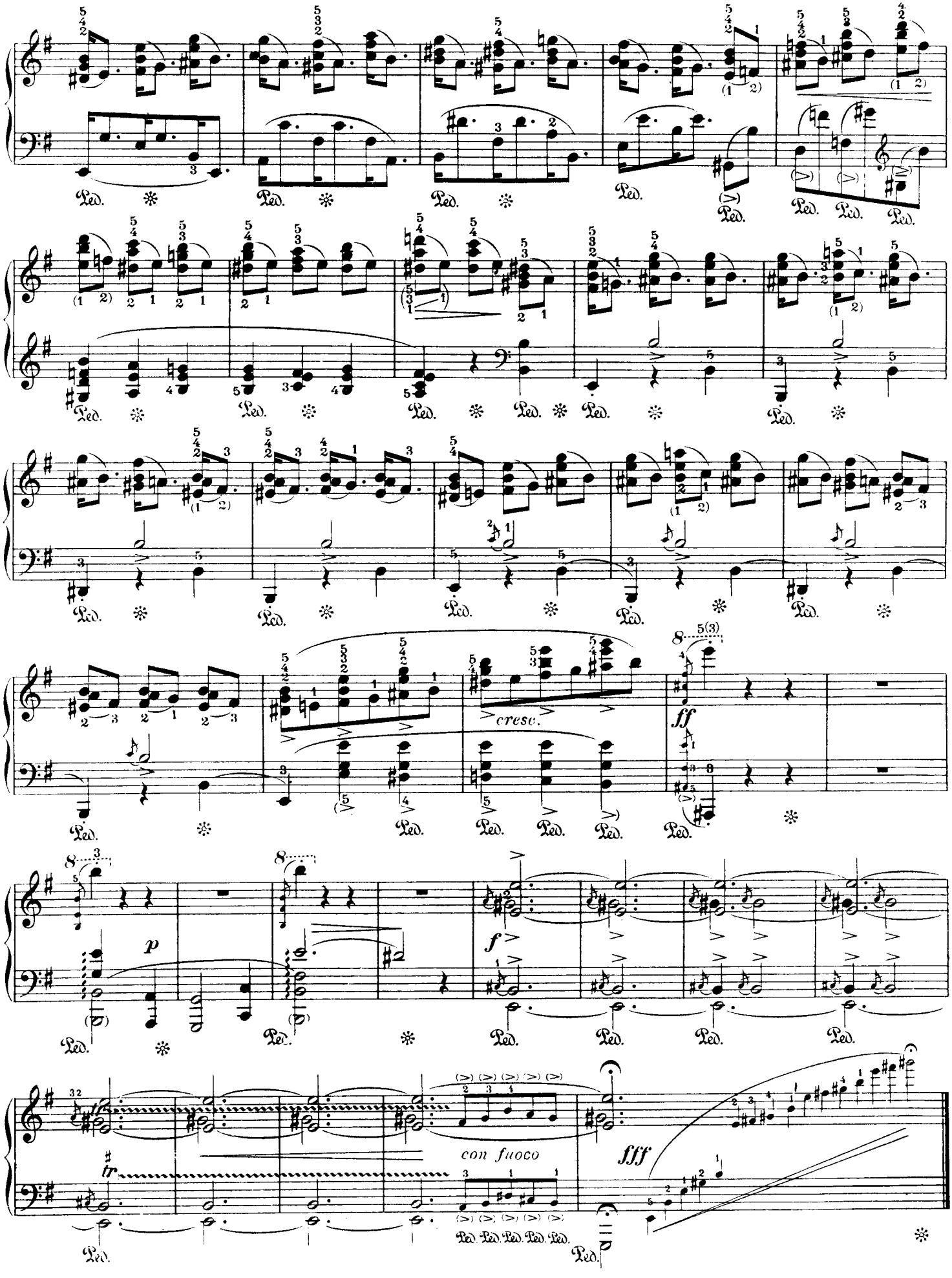
f

(*) The first French editions have it thus 


p
Più lento
leggiero
sostenuto il canto


Ped.
cresc.
f
dim.


pp
leggierissimo
Ped.
smorz.
Tempo I°
(Poco riten.)
(p)


cresc.
ff
p
f
con fuoco
fff

STUDY N° 6

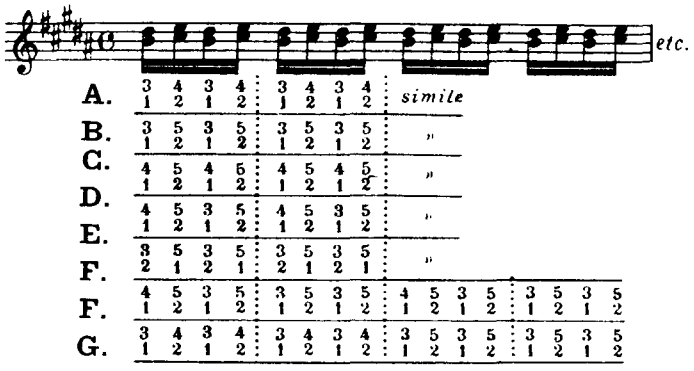
(Op. 25)

We have not found it possible to give one standard-type of fingering for the scales and passages in double notes of this Study as the student will have to employ the fingering which is best suited to the individual structure of his hand.

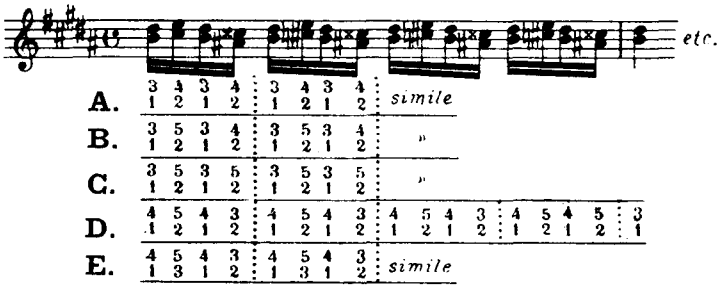
Moreover, according to whether the passage he is interpreting requires to be played legato or non-legato, slowly or quickly, ***f*** or ***p***, he will need to use different fingerings in order to render the modifications of touch, or tempo, or dynamics, even when the succession of notes played is itself identical.

In order to facilitate the selection of the fingering most suitable to the physical convenience of each student, we have drawn-up, for the most characteristic passages of this composition, a table of the various combinations which are equally advisable to render their quick, aerial, flitting — almost impalpable character.

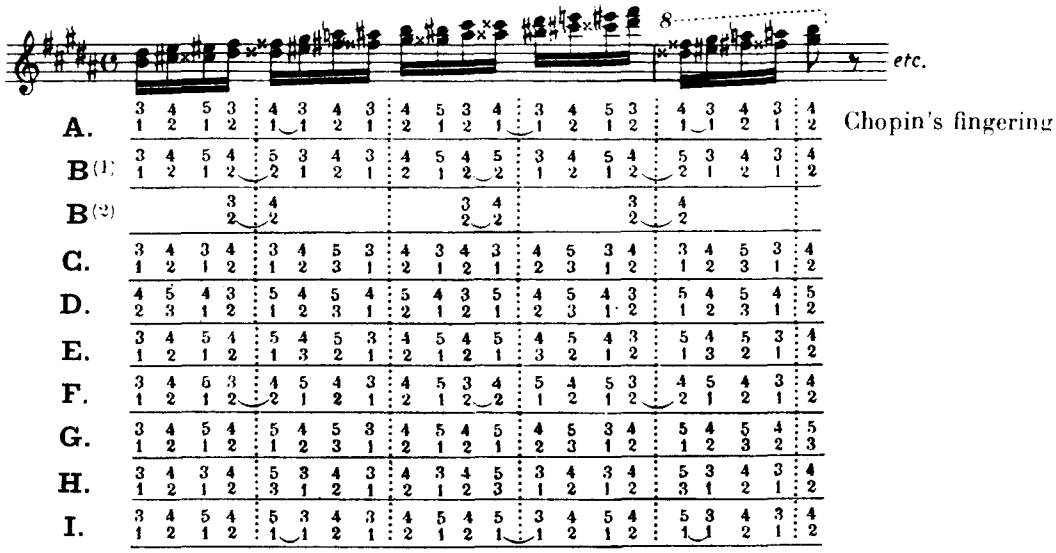
For bars 1-2-3, and similar passages (bars 7-19-23-35-49 and 53).



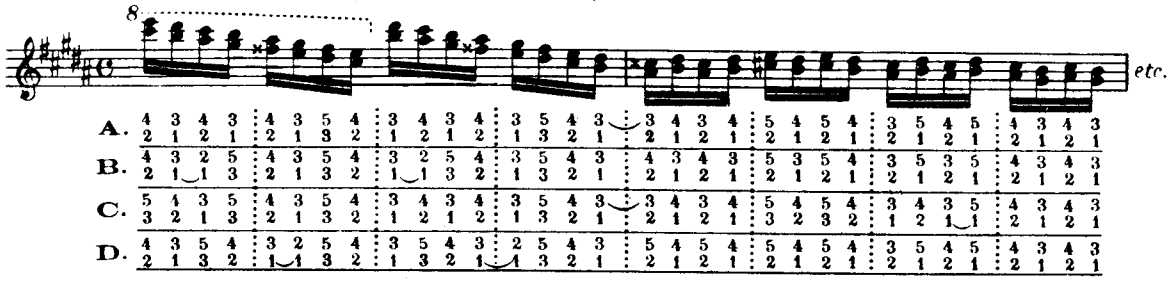
For bar 4, and similar passages (bars 8-20-24 and 36).



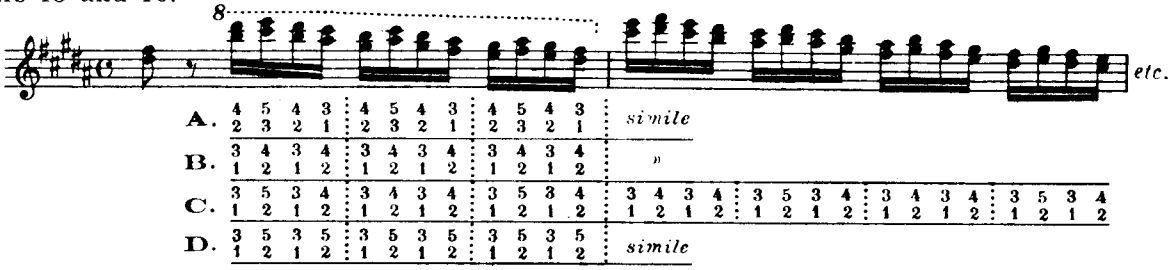
For bars 5 ans 6, and similar. The following fingerings may be applied to all chromatic ascending scales in minor thirds.



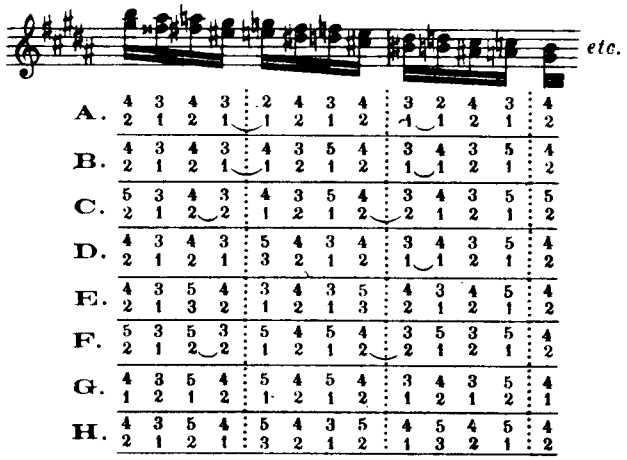
For bars 11 and 12, and similar (bars 13-47 and 48).



For bars 15 and 16.



For the second half of bar 17, the first half of bar 18, and for all descending chromatic scales in minor thirds.



The above may be used as models to practise the fingering of the other passages of this Study for which those given in the text are not convenient. We recommend great care in selecting a fingering out of the different combinations we have suggested ; the student should indeed keep in mind that using a more difficult fingering usually ensures greater firmness of execution.

Therefore we wish to insist on the necessity of studying most thoroughly the different fingerings given above, not only for the purpose of practising this particular composition, but also with a view to developing technique in general.

As a complementary and indispensable exercise, we advise the application of these fingerings to all diatonic scales in minor and major thirds, to all chromatic scales in major thirds, to the trills in major and minor thirds, throughout on every degree of the scale.

In the same manner as for the passages previously examined, the student should carefully note the various combinations of fingerings used in the above exercises and he should practise them in all tempos and dynamics, alternately legato, non-legato and staccato — and then, adopt the fingering most suitable for each passage.

This elementary practice being completed, there remains to perfect the execution according to the requirements of interpretation, and to connect the different fragments of the Study.

The legato « effect » of the figure in double notes usually depends, not so much on the actual and strict binding of the two parts, but on the evenness of tone of one of them.

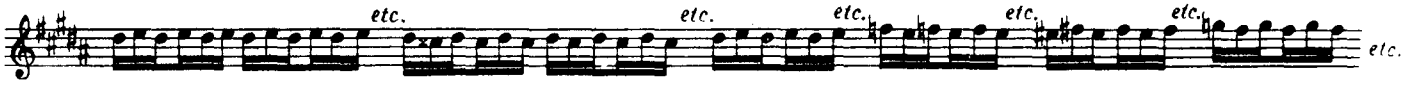
The fingering given in the text permits the actual binding of all the successive progressions ; it is still preferable to slightly emphasize the tone of the upper part.

The neatness of the melodic outline will be increased and a better legato obtained by playing the lower part lightly, as the lower fingers will thus not remain in continuous contact with the keys.

The two parts require therefore to be practised separately, paying full attention to the use of the suitable fingering.

Here, we refer the student to our analysis of Study Nº 2 (Op. 10) of which the first part offers the appropriate model for the preliminary practice of the upper part of this Study.

The formula hereunder consists in connecting each note to the next by a kind of trill of which the beats are grouped in such manner that the accent is given by each finger alternately ; this formula should be applied to the whole Study.

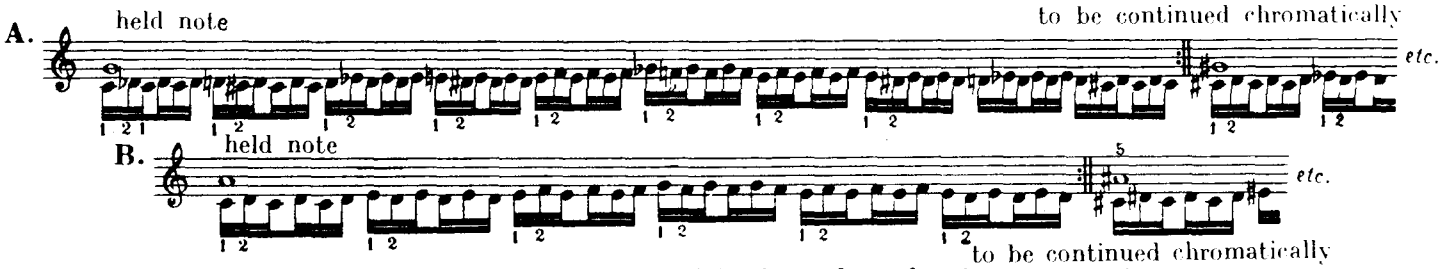


Rhythms :

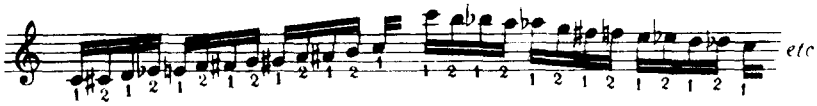
Then, practise the upper part of the chromatic scales as it is written in the text with the following rhythms, and playing carefully legato throughout :

The execution of the lower part of the passages in thirds is rendered particularly difficult from the fact that it is played almost exclusively by the thumb and 2nd finger which, continually cross over each other, and also the action of the upper fingers and the natural structure of the hand, all of which throw the thumb and 2nd finger on to the left edge of the keys, an extremely unfavourable position for playing rapid progressions, especially in ascending passages.

In order to master this difficulty, it is necessary first of all to ensure the mobility of the thumb and 2nd finger, by practising the following exercises :



Next, without the held note, according to the models given above for the practice of the upper part, thus :

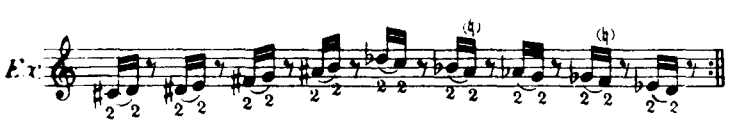


To be played also in A sharp with the same fingering, beginning with the thumb.

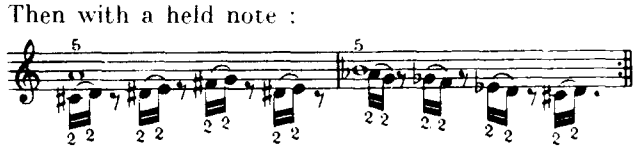
Further, practise diatonic scales in every key, using exclusively the thumb and 2nd finger, playing them either legato or staccato, gradually quickening the tempo up to presto.

Then practise the lower part of the right hand with the fingering adopted, employing the same rhythms as those mentioned for the upper part.

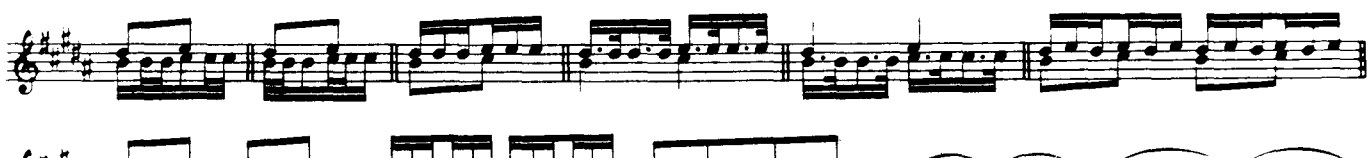
Before practising the chromatic scales with the fingering given in the text — which in our opinion is the most suitable to ensure quick, light and legato playing — we should advise the student to practise the movement of the 2nd finger which should slide from one black key to the following white one.



Then with a held note :



Having thus practised separately the two parts played by the right hand, and having achieved perfect execution of each, practise the passages as they are written in the text, in fragments of six or eight bars, employing the following variants :



And further, with the following rhythms :

Practise also playing the upper part legato and the lower one staccato, and vice-versa.

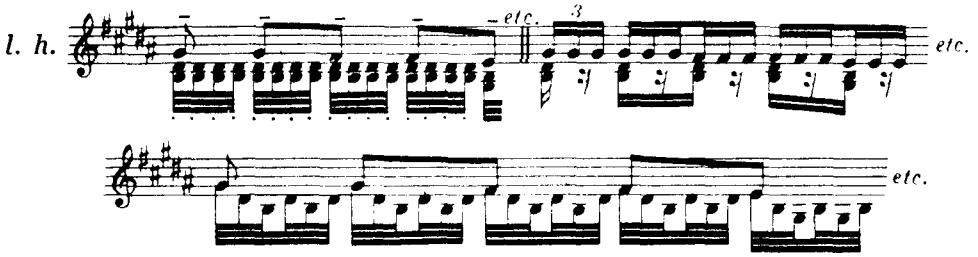
In order to ensure quick and light execution of the thirds, the fingers must be absolutely dissociated from the weight of the hand and they must not serve to support the latter as it shifts along the keyboard. It is the wrist and forearm which should hold up the hand slightly above the keys and conduct it with decision and accuracy. The fingers, by falling naturally into position on the keys, and by being raised as slightly as possible, will acquire the necessary mobility and independence of action.

To increase the tone, the weight of the fingers should be increased by slightly lowering the hand.

There is no doubt that from a purely musical point of view this Study does not rank among the most peerless of Chopin's compositions ; however, virtuosity by lending it the required ease and delicacy, confers upon it a certain birdlike, rapid and fascinating character. Here, once more, it is the old formula of the harpsichordists which Chopin revived and frequently used — namely, perfection of playing — which engenders the musical spell and poetical atmosphere of this composition.

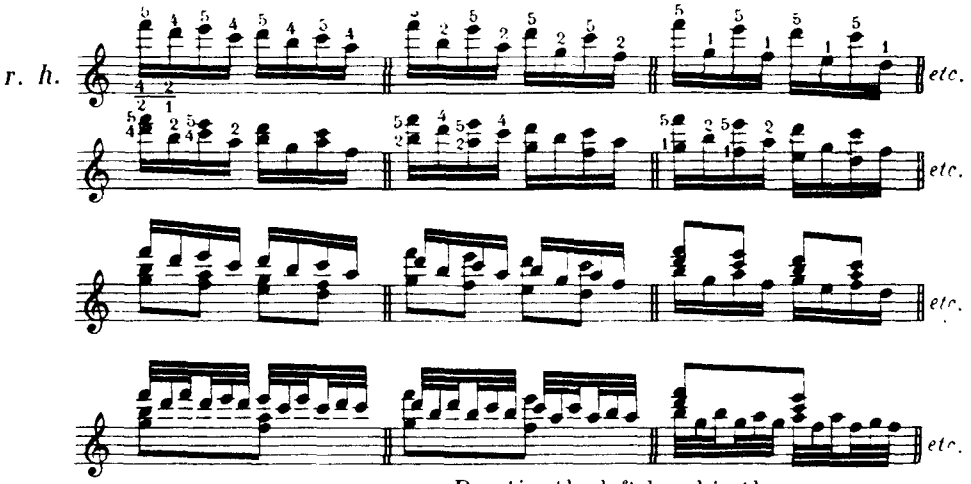
The design and rhythm of the left hand should be discreetly brought out.

The delicate accent given by the thumb and 2nd finger which outlines the melodic curve of the 5th and 6th bars, and others similar, should be practised as follows :



When performing, the punctutation of these two bars and similar ones, should be :

The technique applied to the Study in general is not quite suitable to bars 27-28-29-30-31-32-33 and 34, which should first of all be practised thus :



Practise the left hand in the same manner

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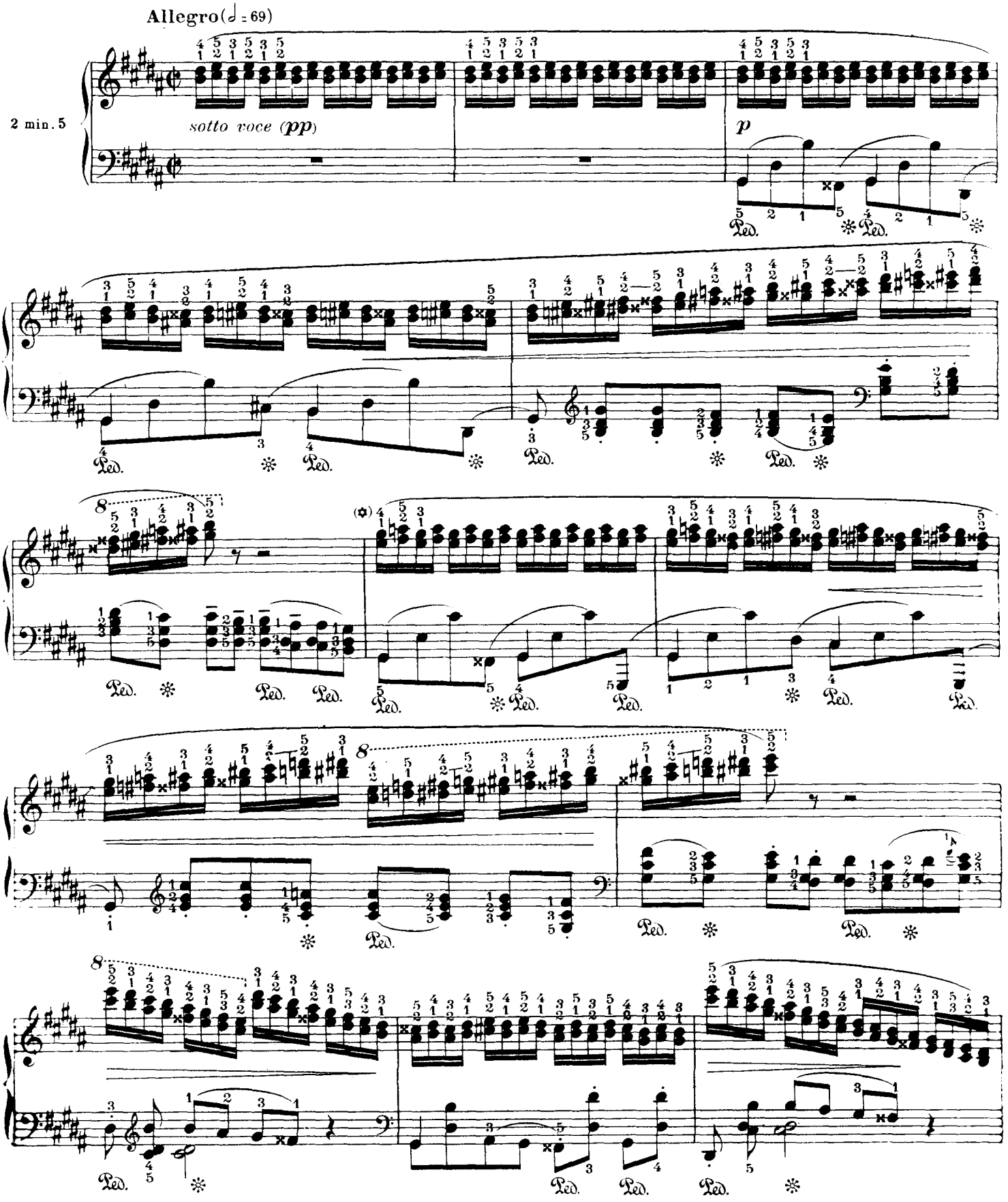
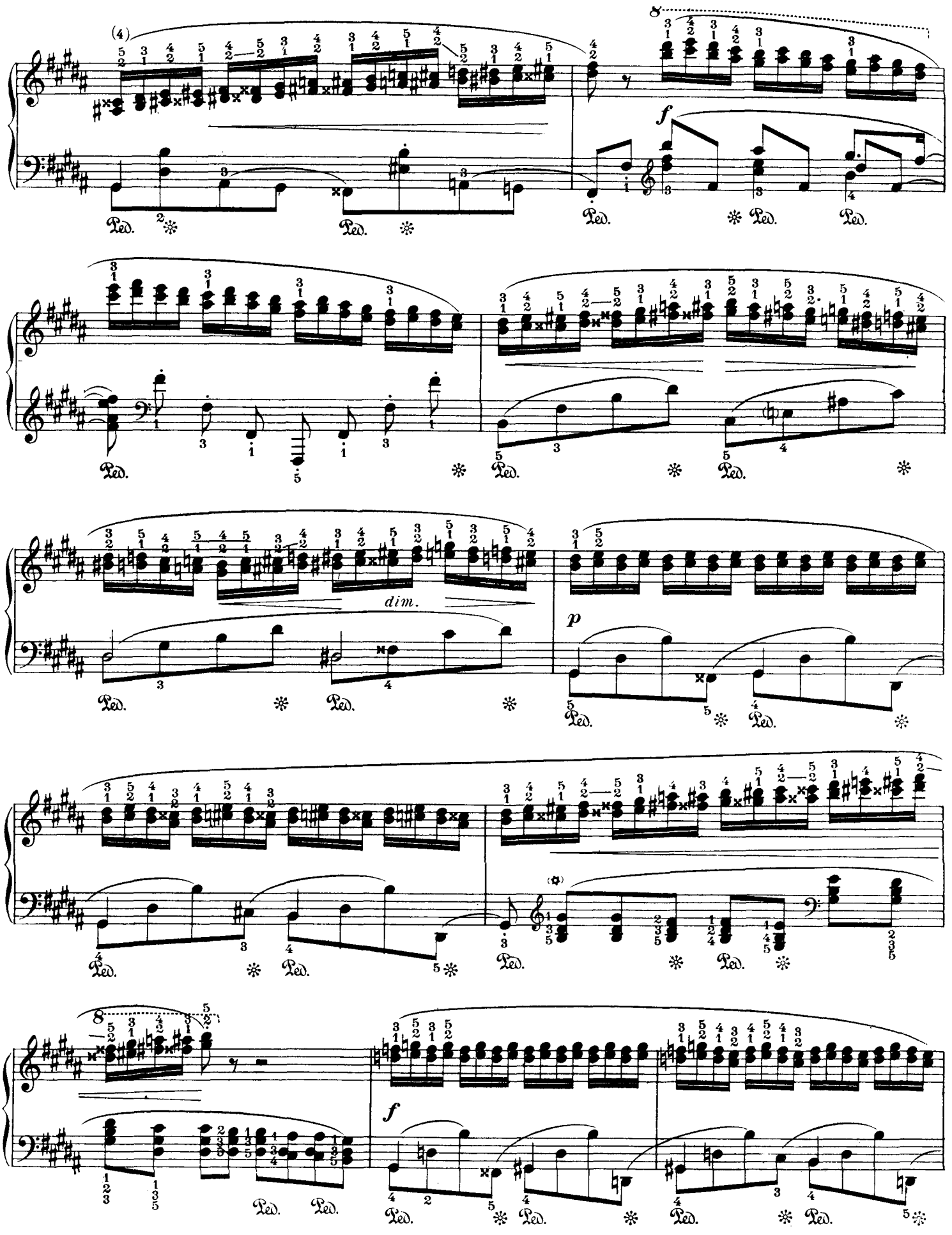
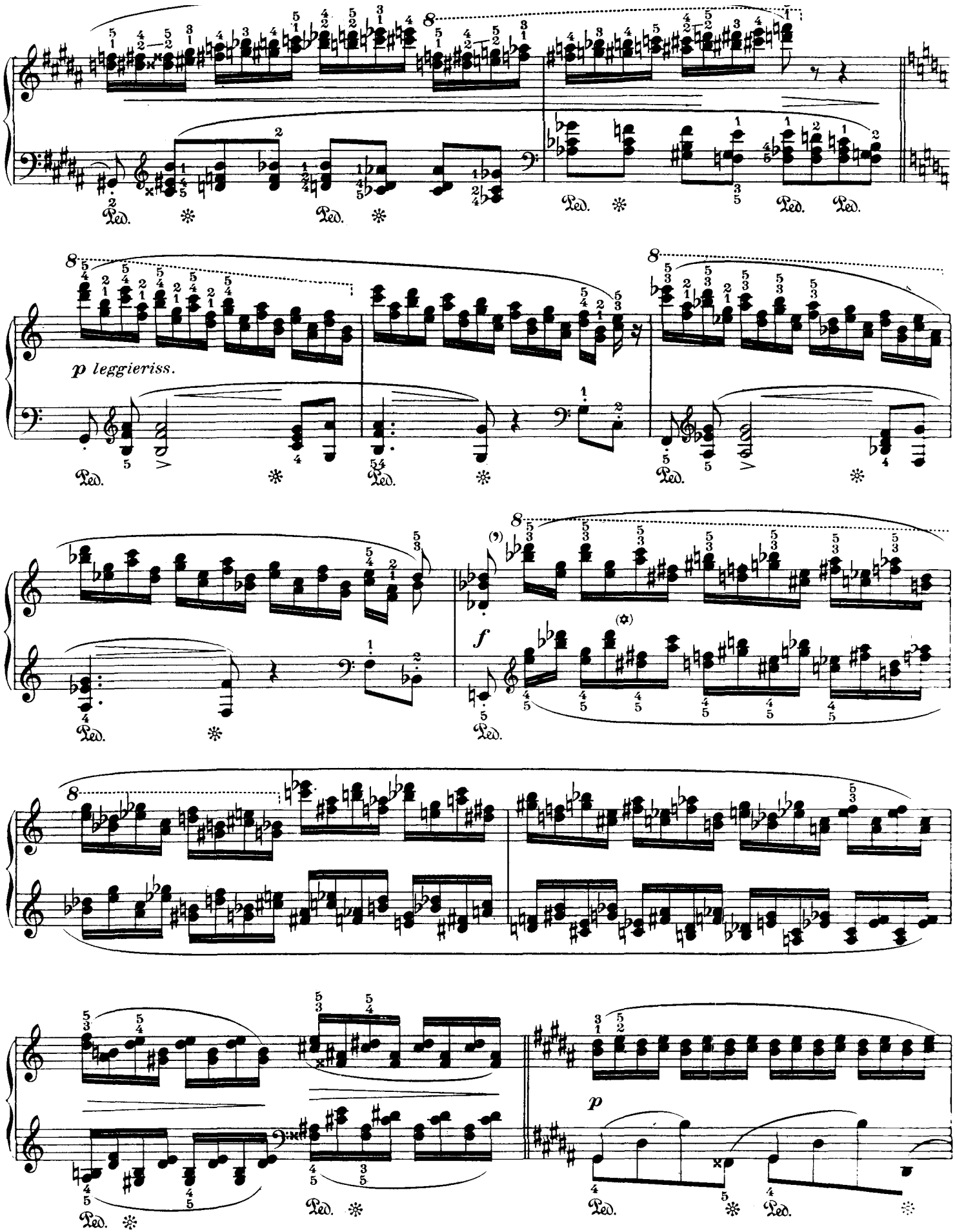


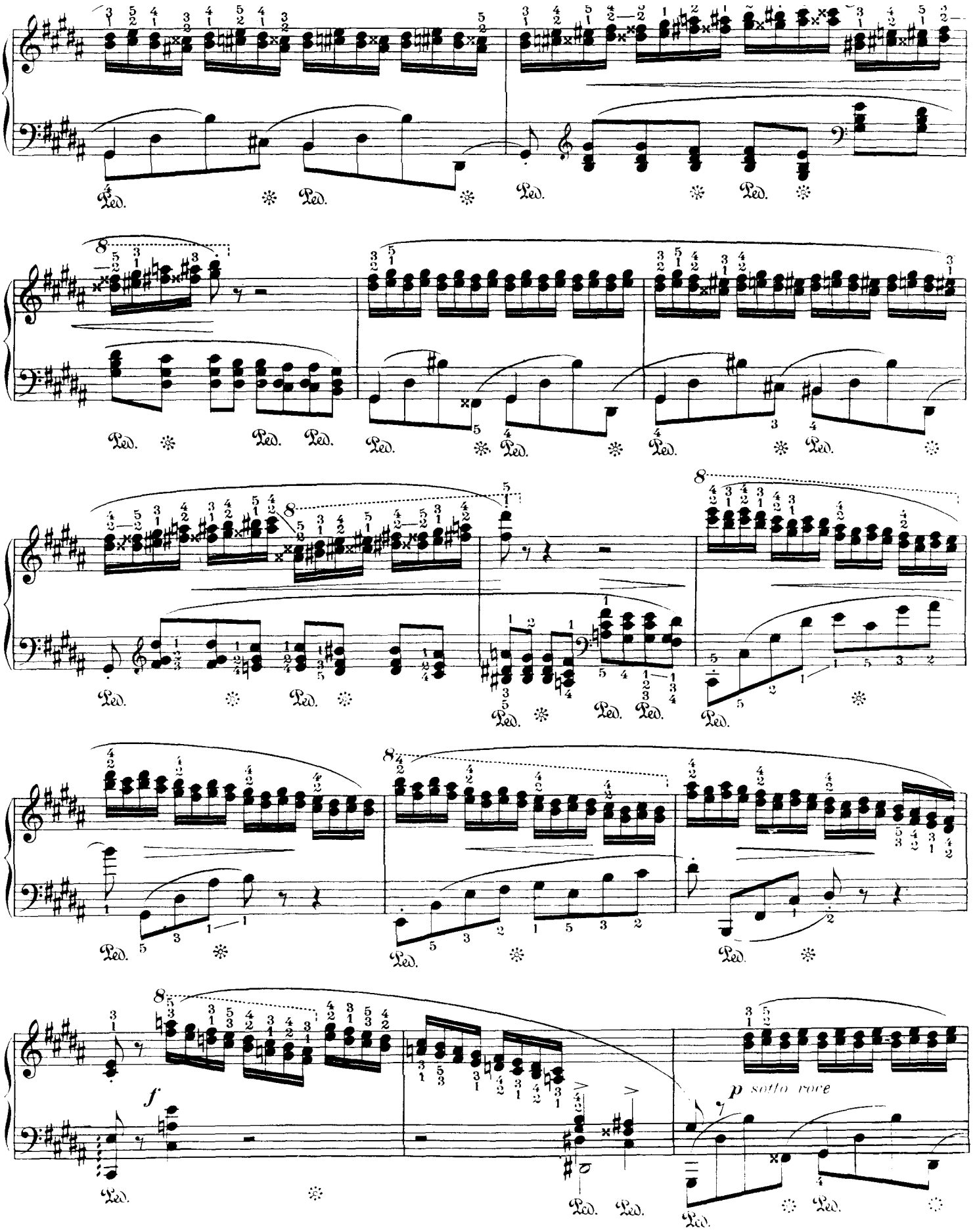
* The first editions have no ♮ in front of the „ a " : we believe this is most likely due to an omission.

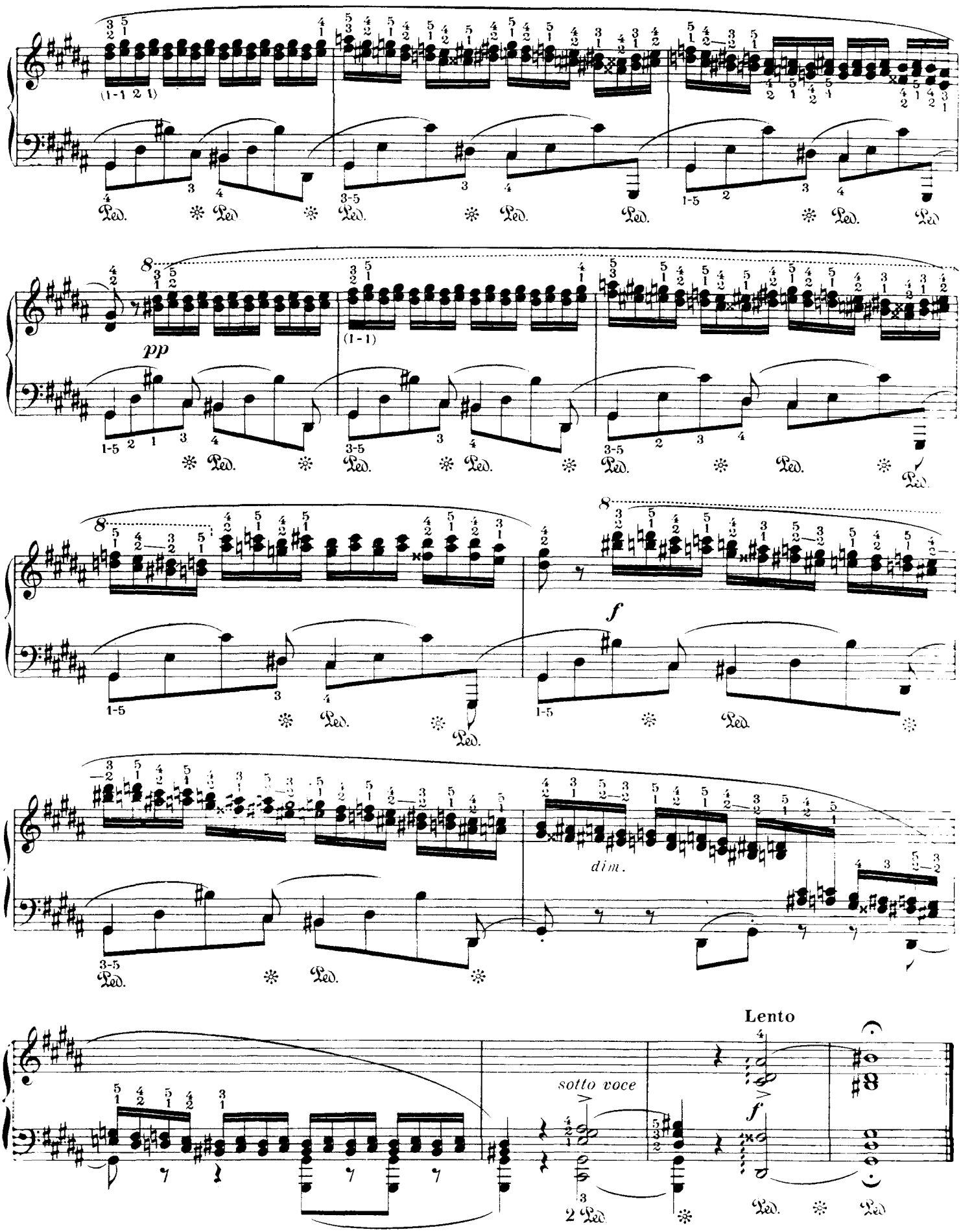


(*) Same remark as on P. 43.



* We advise for this chromatic downward progression, a slight vibrato of the sustaining pedal.


Ped.
8
f
p sotto voce


(1-1 2 1)
Ped.
8
pp
(1-1)
f
dim.
Lento
sotto voce
2 Ped.

STUDY N° 7

(Op. 25)

It has become so usual to call this Study by the name of « Study for the Left Hand », that this has gradually altered the expressional significance of the composition and perverted its educational value to such an extent that, in our opinion, the somewhat traditional interpretation deriving from this habit calls for being counteracted.

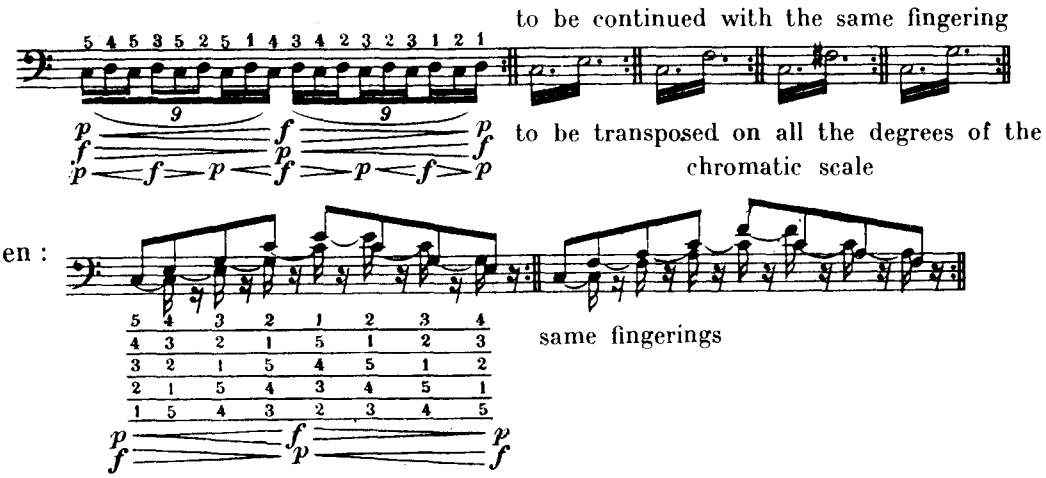
Consequently, we should like to warn the performer against any summary conception which might lead him to only emphasize the figure of the bass — either by playing with too much feeling, or exaggerated volume of sound — while confining the right hand part to be but a discreet accompaniment.

On the contrary, the poetical conception and the real technical interest afforded by this Study rest on a proper distribution of the tone-value of the two parts, and on the exact quality of touch required for binding — though not blending — the notes together while retaining to each its expressive individuality.

A truly musical interpretation of this admirable piece demands that, above the poignant lament of the bass, fraught with passion and regret, devoured — it would seem — by a dramatic and unconsolable love, should soar aloft, far away but penetrating and perfectly distinct, the wounded treble, sad and tender of the right hand.

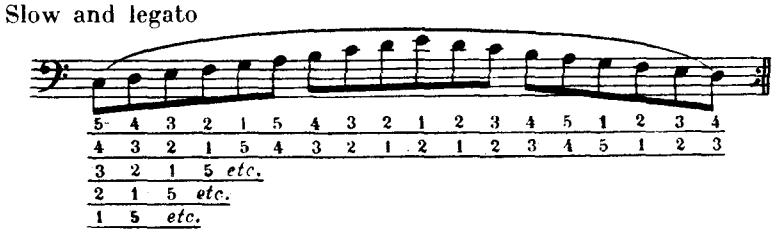
In order to render the expressive meaning of the composition, upon which we have just enlarged, it will be of course necessary to practise each hand first of all separately, so that both should acquire the excellence and homogeneous quality of tone required.

First, for the left hand, to increase and ensure an equal expressive power for each finger, practise the following exercises using the weight of the hand :

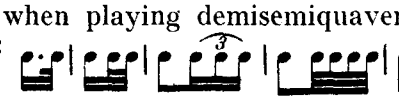


Practise the above arpeggio figures on all the degrees of the chromatic scale, in a slow tempo and strictly legato.

Next, diatonic and chromatic scales in all keys, using the following finger-successions :



playing ***p*** to ***f*** , and ***f*** to ***p*** throughout, taking great care that grading of tone should be obtained strictly by greater or lesser weight of the hand — only the finger transmitting the latter to the key, and the wrist remaining flexible whatever the grade.

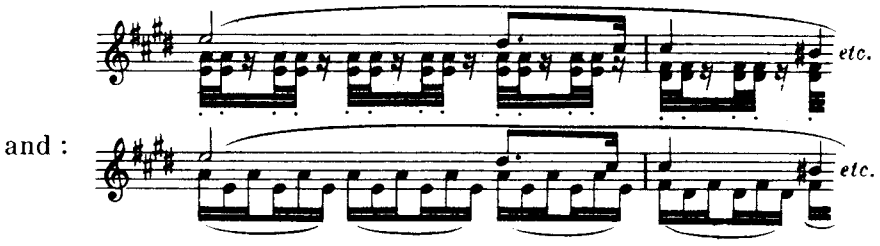
The fingers should be raised with more precision only when playing demisemiquaver or grace-note figures which should be practised with the following rhythms :  (1)

Further, practice the whole left hand part, in long fragments, endeavouring that the declamation should be as natural and pathetic as if the notes themselves were passionate utterances. Exception being made, however, for bars 28 to 36, in which the left hand should softly glide over the keys, letting only the right hand call forth the melancholy sweetness of the past.

As regards the right hand, the necessity of separating the upper voice from the accompanying harmonies, will demand preparatory work, slightly similar to that we recommended for Study N° 3 (Op. 10).

First, practise the upper melodic line giving full attention to its very expressive punctuation.

Then, adding the accompaniment, practise as follows :



and :

Further, combine the two hands, giving full attention to the evenness of tone mentioned at the beginning of the present analysis, of which the general scheme may be suggested as follows :

Upper melodic line : ***mp*** *penetrating*
Accompaniment : ***pp*** *but well-sustained*
Lower melodic line : ***mf*** *eloquent*

Keep the fingers of the right hand which are playing the accompanying part in contact with the keys throughout, in order to prevent any abrupt attack.

By practising in this manner, it will be possible on double escapement keyboards to emit the sound with utmost softness by not letting the keys come back to their original position.

The rare pedal-marks indicated by Chopin are obviously unsufficient for an expressive rendering of this Study. We advise using the pedal almost constantly ; it should, however, be changed frequently — though unobtrusively — so as to prevent any stagnation of sound in the lower register of the piano ; and on the condition also that this practically permanent use of the pedal should not, because of the necessity of linking up all the notes of the melody, disregard the dues of harmonic correspondancy.

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M.S. Original = ♩ = 60 *Edit. Schlesinger* = ♩ = 66

Lento (♩ = 66)

3 min. 50

(quasi recitativo)

p

pp

Ped. (molto cantabile)

dim.

ten.

(*) Execute thus :

cresc.

Riten.

fff

pp

a Tempo

fz p

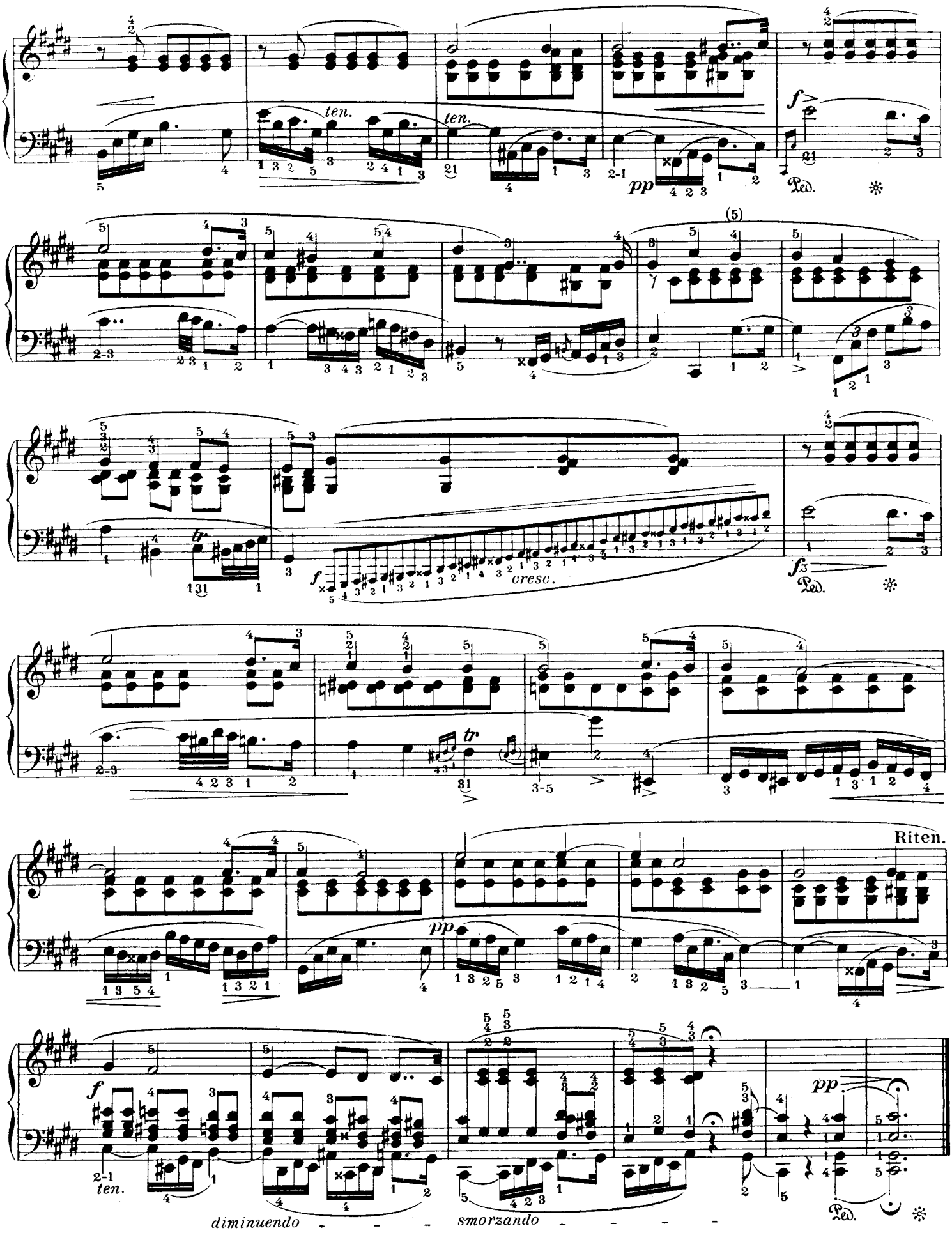
pp

ppp

smorz.

pp

* Execute thus :


ten.
ten.
pp
Ped.
(5)
tr
f
cresc.
fz
Ped.
tr
Riten.
pp
f
ten.
diminuendo
smorzando
pp.
Ped.

STUDY N° 8

(Op. 25)

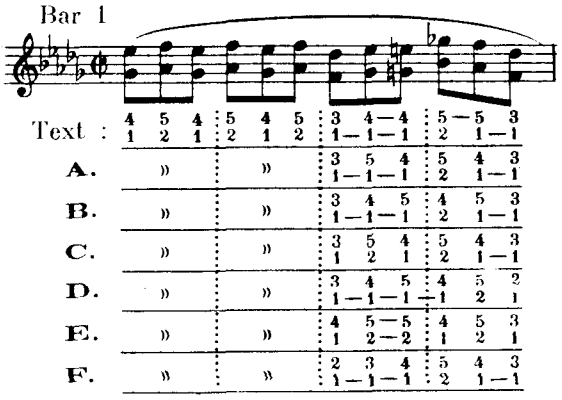
The right hand part of this Study consisting in an uninterrupted succession of sixths imposes such a continuous wide-stretch upon the fingers that it would appear that the fingering adopted to play this part should meet the requirements of physical convenience more than those of interpretation. It is possible, however, to satisfy both considerations by allowing the same upper finger, or lower finger, or both simultaneously, to slide from one key to the next, this gliding-movement helps to ease the wide intervals and is, at the same time, perfectly in keeping with the delicate atmosphere particular to this composition.

Here, we wish to point out that this manner of playing though perfectly appropriate for rendering the individual character of this piece, must not be taken as a model to be applied for playing sixths in general.

We therefore advise, as we did for the practice of sixths and thirds, to practise most thoroughly — parallel with the special practice we suggest further on — a detailed study of scales and arpeggios diatonic and chromatic in major and minor sixths, in every key, in every tempo, playing alternately staccato and legato, ***p*** and ***f*** . This will enable the student to select and adopt the most suitable fingering for a perfect rendering of these various modes of execution.

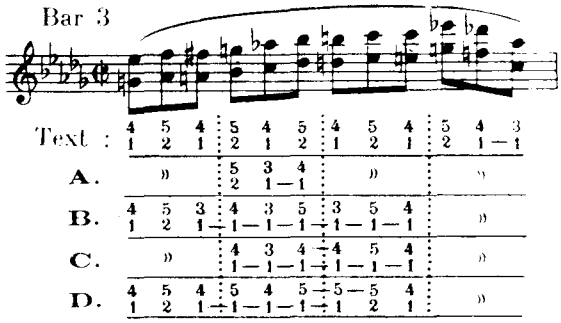
As regards this present Study, we give hereunder, a few examples of right-hand fingerings relating to certain bars for which those given in the text offer too great a difficulty.

Bar 1



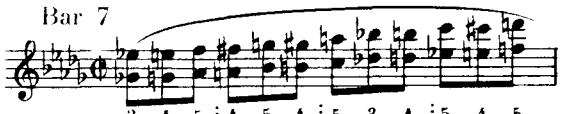
Text :	4	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	4	5	5	3											
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	—	—	1	2	1											
							1	1	1														
A.	»			»			3	5	4	5	4	3											
							1	—	—	2	1	—											
								1	1			1											
B.	»			»			3	4	5	4	5	3											
							1	—	—	2	1	—											
								1	1			1											
C.	»			»			3	5	4	5	4	3											
							1	2	1	2	1	—											
D.	»			»			3	4	5	4	5	2											
							1	—	—	1	2	1											
								1	1														
E.	»			»			4	5	5	4	5	3											
							1	2	—	1	2	1											
								2	2														
F.	»			»			2	3	4	5	4	3											
							1	—	—	2	1	—											
								1	1			1											

Bar 3



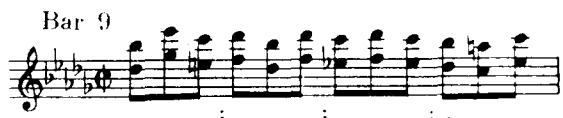
Text :	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	3											
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	—											
												1											
A.	»			5	3	4	»			»													
				2	1	—																	
						1																	
B.	4	5	3	4	3	5	3	5	4	»													
	1	2	1	—	1	—	1	—	1														
				1		1		1															
C.	»			4	3	4	4	5	4	»													
				1	—	1	—	1	—														
						1			1														
D.	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	—	5	4	»												
	1	2	1	—	1	—	1	—	1	2	1												
				1		1		1															

Bar 7



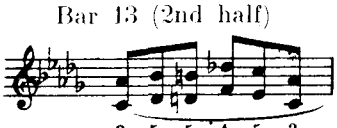
Text :	3	4	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	5	4	5											
	1	—	2	1	2	1	1	—	—	1	2	1											
		1						1	1														
A.	»			4	5	3	4	3	4	5	3	4											
				1	2	1	1	—	—	2	1	—											
								1	1			1											
B.	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	5	4	5											
	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	—	—	2	1	—											
								1	1			1											
C.	4	5	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	5	3	4											
	1	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	1	2	1	—											
		1		1		1		1				1											
D.	3	4	5	»			»			5	3	4											
	1	—	1							1	—	1											
		1										1											
E.	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	5	4	5											
	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	—	2	1	2											

Bar 9



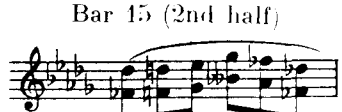
Text :	3	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	4	5											
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	—	2											
											1												
A.	»			»			4	5	5	4	3	5											
							1	—	—	1	—	2											
								1	1		1												
B.	»			»			5	3	5	4	5	4	5	3									
							2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1									

Bar 13 (2nd half)

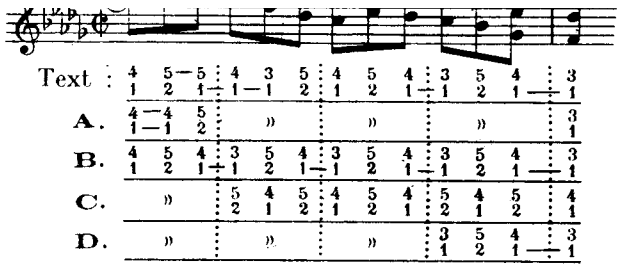


Text .	3	5	5	4	5	3																	
	1	2	—	1	2	1																	
		2	2																				
A.	3	4	4	5	5	3																	
	1	—	—	2	1	—																	
		1	1			1																	
B.	3	4	5	4	5	3																	
	1	—	—	2	1	—																	
		1	1			1																	
C.	4	5	4	5	4	3																	
	1	2	1	2	1	—																	
						1																	
D.	4	5	4	»																			
	1	—	—																				
		1	1																				
E.	4	5	4	5	5	4																	
	1	2	1	—	2	1																	
				1																			

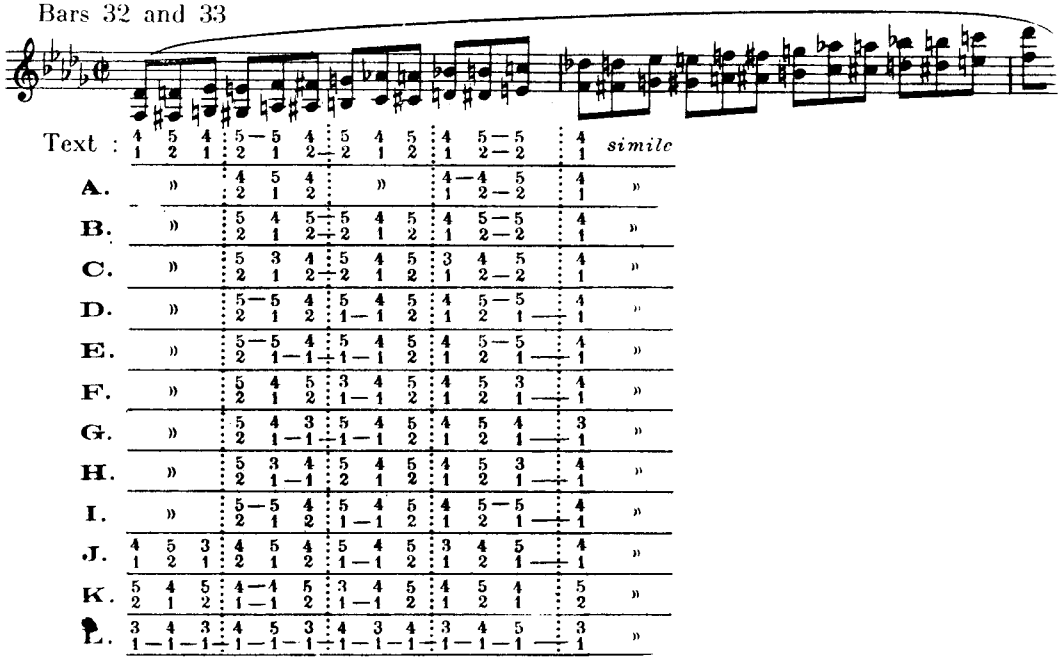
Bar 15 (2nd half)



Text :	3	5	4	5	5	3																	
	1	—	2	1	2	1																	
		1																					
A.	3	5	4	»																			
	1	—	—																				
		1	1																				
B.	3	4	5	»																			
	1	—	2																				
		1																					
C.	3	4	3	»																			
	1	—	—																				
		1	1																				
D.	»			5	5	3																	
				2	1	—																	
						1																	
E.	4	5	4	5	4	3																	
	1	2	1	2	1	—																	
						1																	
F.	»			5	5	4																	
				1	2	1																	
G.	4	5	4	»																			
	1	—	—																				
		1	1																				



Bars 32 and 33



The fingering we suggest for the chromatic scale of Bars 30 and 31 is particularly appropriate for playing legato and « *piano* ».

We draw the performer's attention to Bar 34 : the fingering is modified here on account of the crescendo.

Having adopted the most suitable fingering for these above mentioned passages, the student should now turn his attention to practising the right hand part throughout the Study, according to the explanations previously given for the practice of thirds.

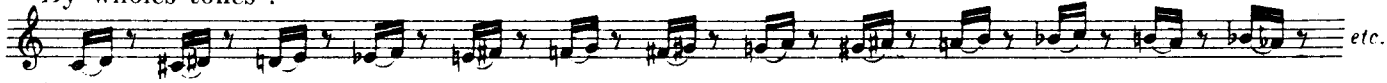
1º Practise each part separately, with modifications in rhythm, dynamics and touch, employing also as a variant the trill previously suggested for Study Nº 6.

2º Special practice of the gliding movement whose importance is greater here owing to the fact that a greater number of fingers are involved. (1)

By semi-tones, thus :

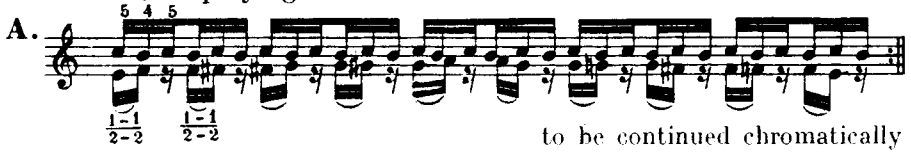
Employing the five fingers, one after the other.

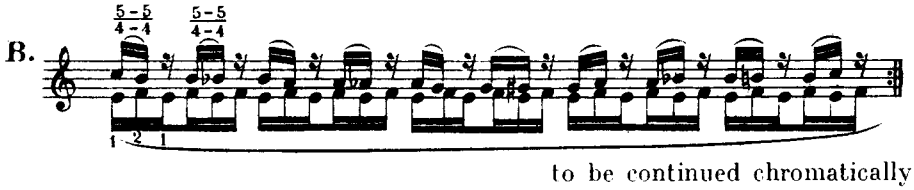
By wholes tones :



Again employing the five fingers.

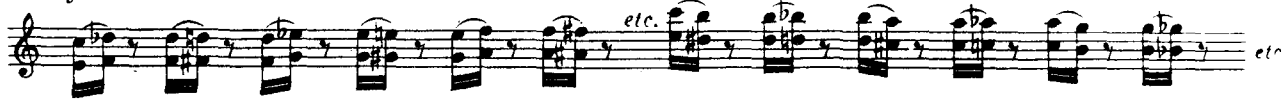
Further, employing trills :



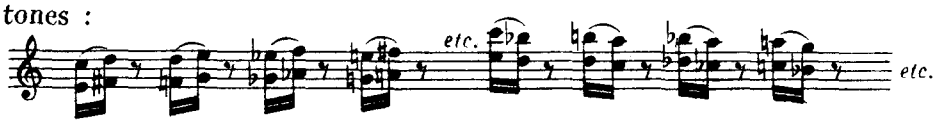


Next, for the gliding movement of upper and lower fingers simultaneously, thus :

By semi-tones :

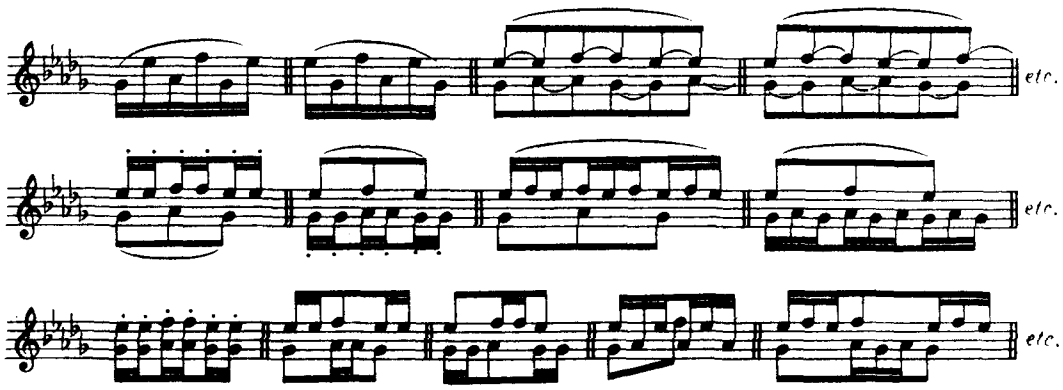


By whole tones :



employing successively the following combinations of fingerings : $\frac{4-4}{1-1}$ | $\frac{5-5}{1-1}$ | $\frac{5-5}{2-2}$ | $\frac{3-3}{1-1}$ |, and for the exercise by semi-tones, only : $\frac{4-4}{2-2}$|

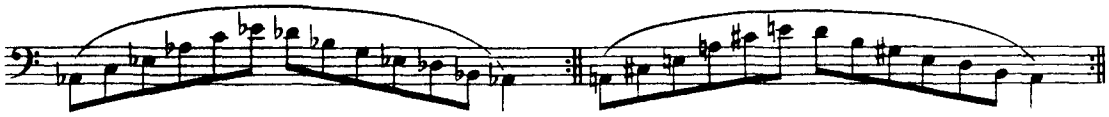
3° Combine the two parts of the right hand, and practise by fragments of three or four bars with the following variants :



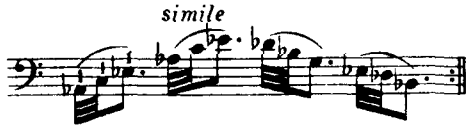
Next, with the rhythms given previously for practising the thirds.

The almost constant disjunct motion of the double notes played by the left hand will require to be specially prepared, as regards the thumb.

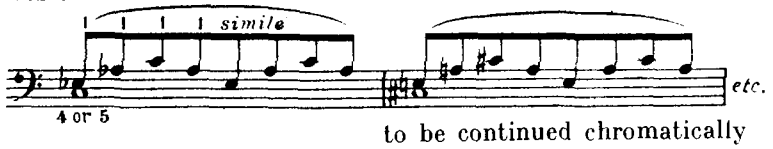
First of all, practise in every key using *only* the thumb, the following arpeggio-formulae :



Then :

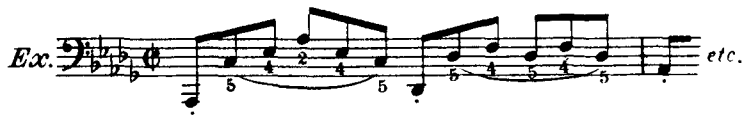


Next, with held notes :



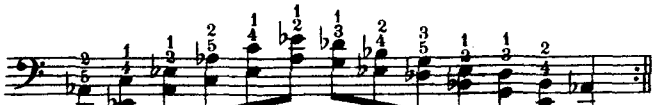
to be continued chromatically

Having acquired, thanks to the foregoing exercises, lightness and independence of the thumb, the student should practise the lower part of the sixths played by the left hand, carefully employing the proper fingering.

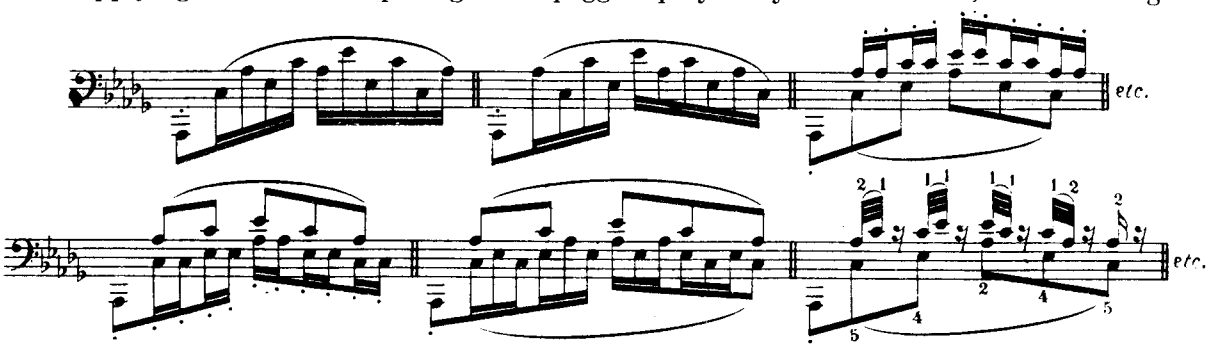


Seeing that the legato and slightly predominant tone of this lower part will be the principal factor to ensure the ultimate perfection required of the left hand, the student should combine the two parts only when he has completely mastered the difficulties presented by the lower part in this elementary form.

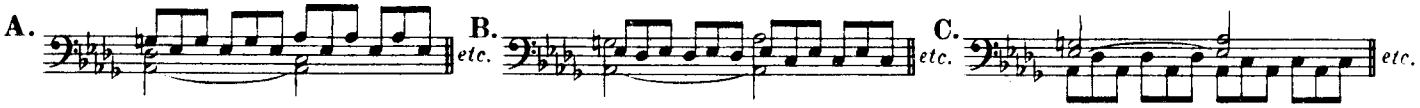
Next, practise the following preparatory exercise :



Further, applying to the whole passage in arpeggios played by the left hand, the following variants :



Bars 13-14-15-16-17-18 - 26-32-33 and 34 should be first of all practised thus :



Practise also the left hand part throughout as it is written in the text, with the rhythms :

Then, combining the two hands, practise in short fragments employing for each hand a different variant, selected from those given above.

This manner of practising will yield the best technical results for simultaneous attack of the fingers in both hands, an essential asset towards the proper execution of this Study.

It remains now to draw the performer's attention to the importance of the wrist when playing sixths-legato. Indeed, its utmost flexibility and the complete relaxation of its muscles — as well as the slight « drawer » motion it imparts to the hand — are the only means by which the actual binding of the black keys to the white ones, or vice-versa can be obtained. Moreover, this flexibility of the wrist will enable the « fictitious » legato which we mentioned when analysing the Study in thirds, by allowing the fingers the greatest possible independence of tone.

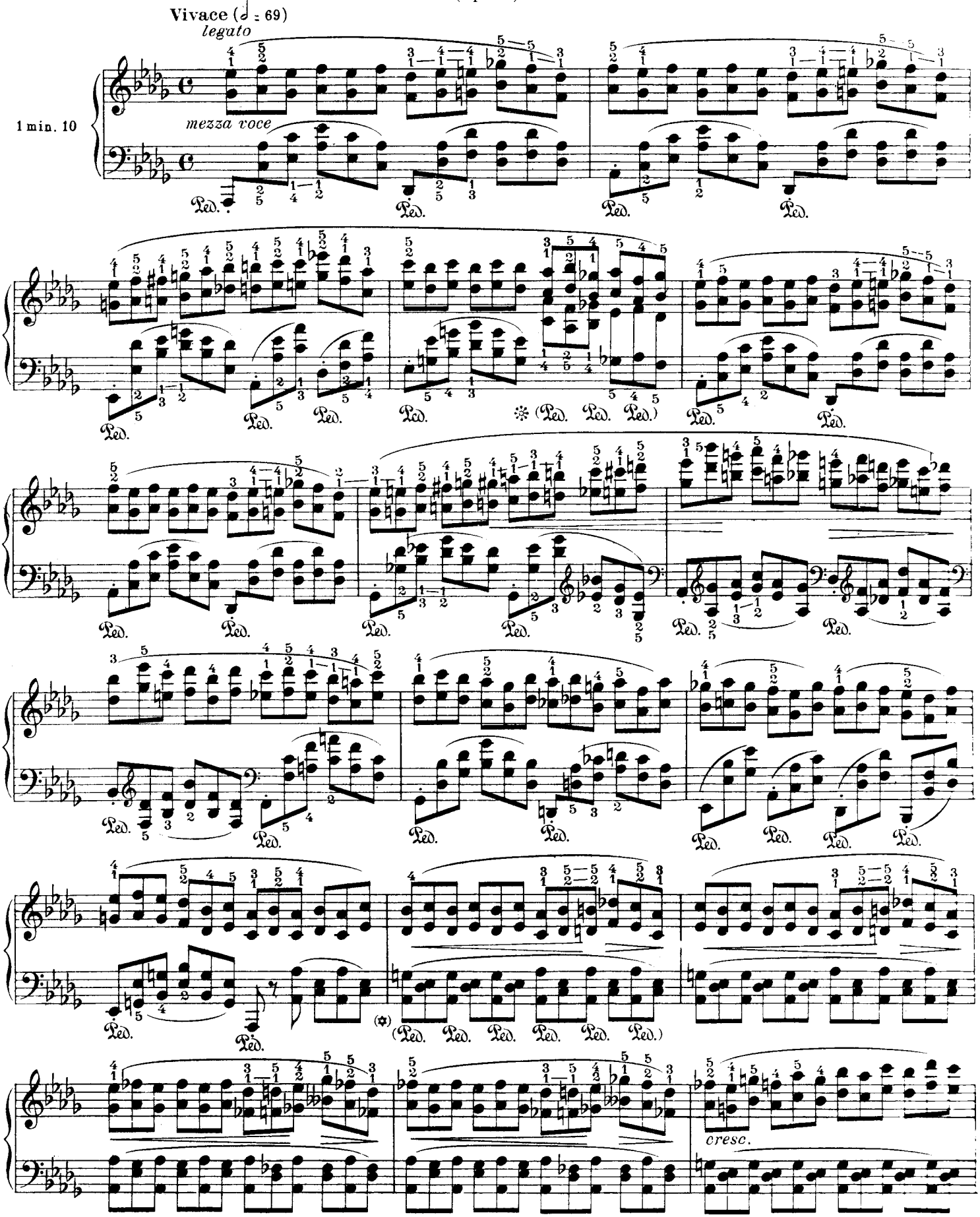
Therefore we wish to insist that it is imperative to avoid all stiffening or contraction of the wrist or of the forearm, both while practising and performing this Study.

We recommend using both pedals simultaneously, this being perfectly appropriate to the whispering character of the composition.

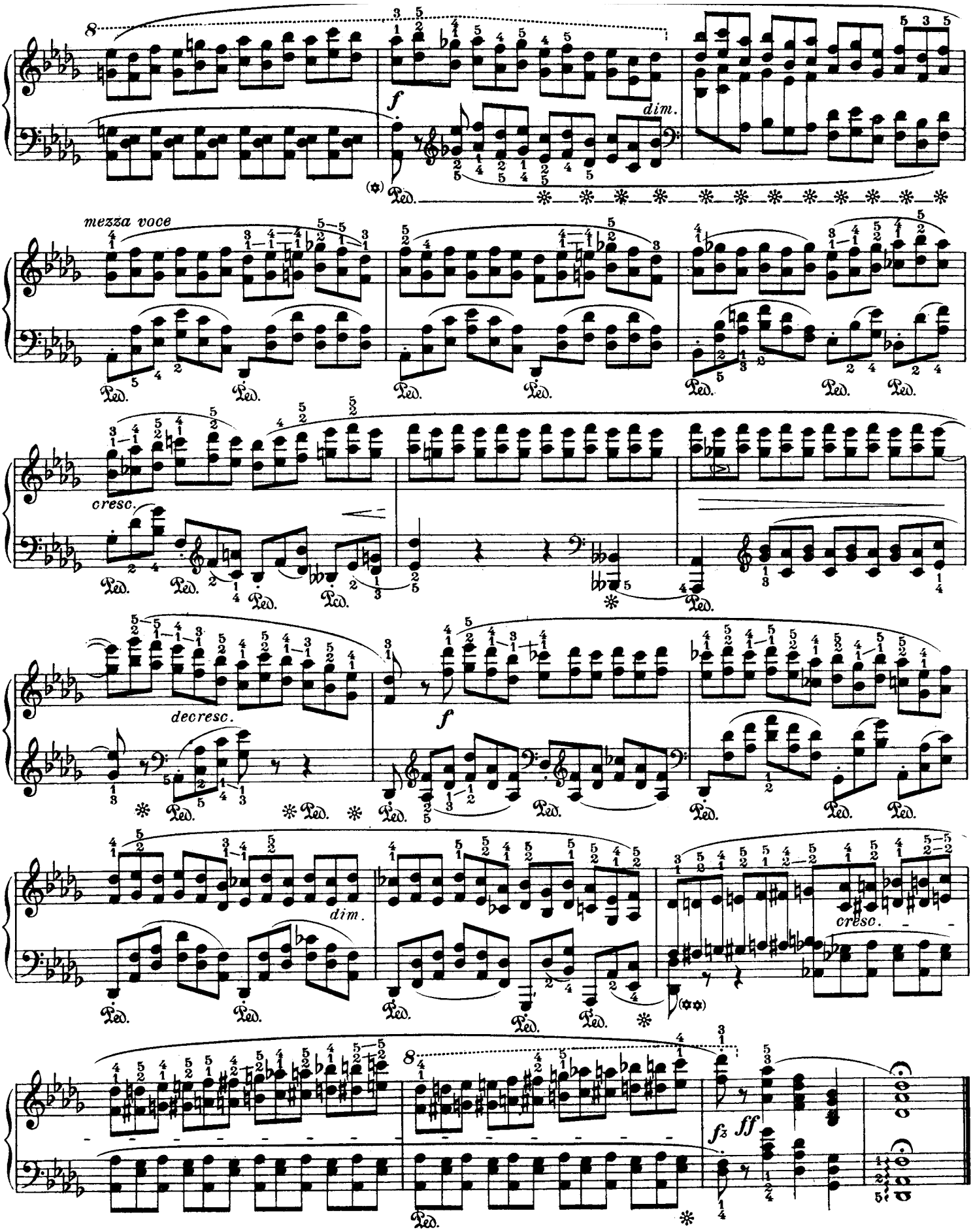
Transpose the whole Study into D major.

ALFRED CORTOT

(Op. 25)



(*) We advise using of the pedal in the same manner for the six following bars.



(*) Slightly emphasize the bass note of the octave so as to ensure its vibration during the two following bars.

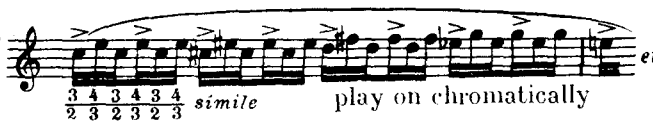
(**) An impression of dryness would arise from not using the pedal here : we consequently recommend lowering and releasing it with

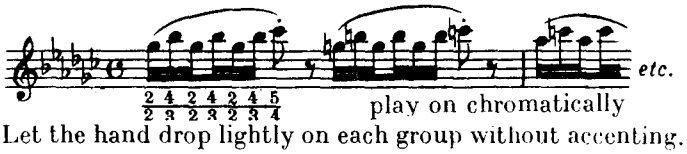
To be intelligently rendered, this Study demands a refined, humorous, somewhat carefree performance: the tone-quality should remain precise and light even in the passages played ***ff***, and a mischievous rhythmical accent should mark the transition from the finger-legato to the wrist-staccato.

Therefore we find it more appropriate to consider this composition as a study for the perfecting of touch *applied* to octave-playing, rather than a study for octave-playing proper.

We have consequently suggested preliminary exercises with this in view; and, though they may appear to have but a remote connection with the object of this Study, they are actually very close to its true technical difficulties.

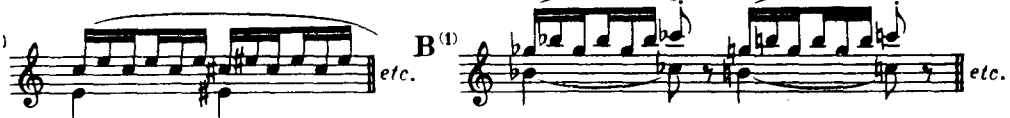
First of all, in order to render the legato passages, ensure an even action of the fingers of the right hand which play these passages.

A. 

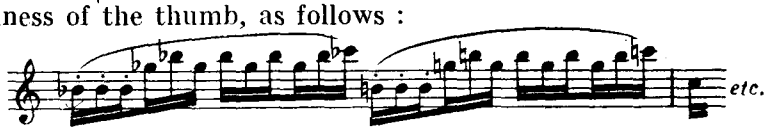
B. 

Let the hand drop lightly on each group without accenting.

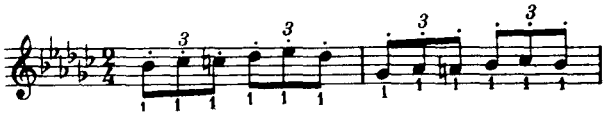
Play the same exercise over again, adding the thumb, play on chromatically

thus : 

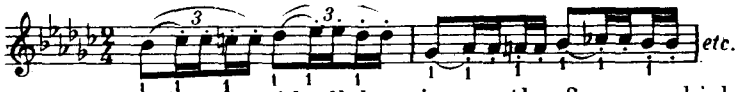
Next, to avoid heaviness of the thumb, as follows :

C. 

Then, practise the whole thumb-part in the right hand, first of all staccato :

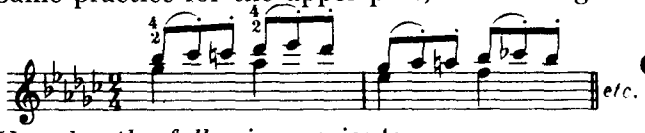
D. 

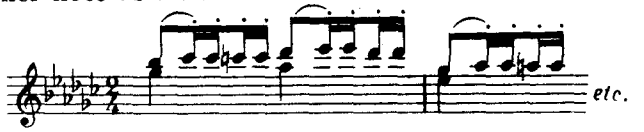
Next, practise binding the first quaver of each triplet to the second, thus :

E. 

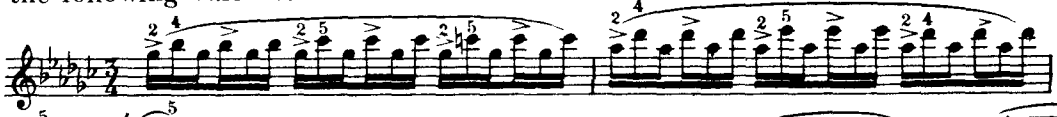
In both above exercises, be careful to avoid all heaviness; the fingers which are not playing should remain slightly curved.

Same practice for the upper part, introducing the inner note as a held note :

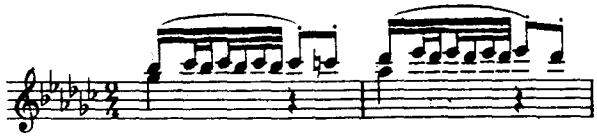
F. 

G. 

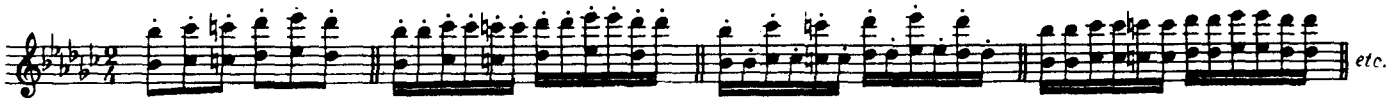
Use also the following variants :

H. 

I.

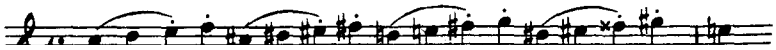
J. 

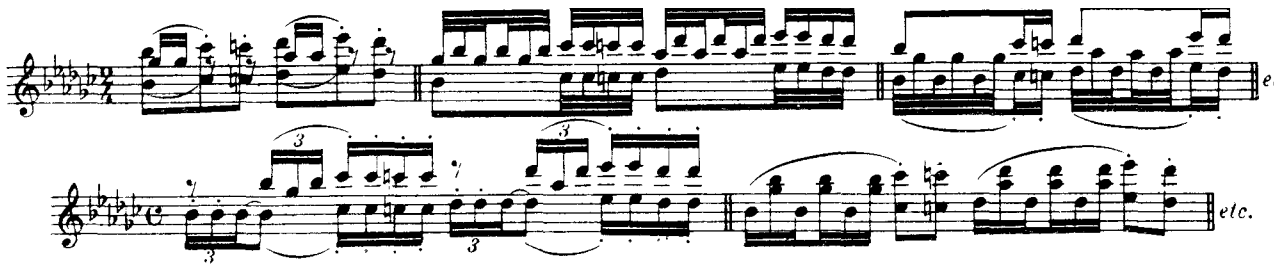
Next, practice the *octave-staccato* :



Then, the transition from the legato to the staccato.

Preliminary exercise :



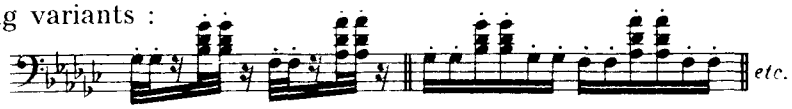


Having practised the foregoing exercises which should bè played alternately *f* and *p* - so that the difference of touch between the legato (the fingers playing the active, the hand the passive part) and the staccato (the wrist being here active and the fingers passive) - the preparatory work of this composition should be completed by frequently repeating the whole part played by the right hand as it is written, paying full attention to the dynamics in the text and each time quickening the tempo up to vivace.

In this manner, the student will acquire the necessary endurance to give the crescendo the intensity it requires and to ensure a perfect evenness of tone which — we repeat — must remain light and transparent when in the *ff*.

The accents on the quavers should be moderate and exactly in proportion to the general nuance : be careful they do not impart any heaviness to the thumb.

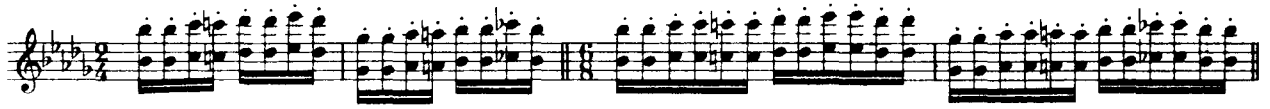
We recommend practising the left hand in the same manner as suggested for Study N° 4 (Op. 25), employing also the following variants :



Great care should be taken, while performing, to keep a steady balance between the right hand and the left.

An excellent exercise for acquiring independence of tone for the fingers of the right hand consists in slightly emphasizing alternately the upper part, then the lower part of the octaves. A moderate use of these different timbres may prove further to be a useful element for interpretation.

Once the Study is perfectly known, we recommend to modify it by employing for both hands the following variants in detached octaves which are a sort of « perpetuum mobile ». :



In the left hand, play two octaves lower, practising with the dynamics of the text.

This light and rapid manner of octave-playing can only be achieved without strain by reducing to a minimum the movements required for each attack.

Consequently, avoid holding the hand too far back from the keyboard ; also, be careful while practising the above variants in slow tempo, not to exaggerate the backward motion of the hand by throwing it back towards the wrist after each octave ; the tips of the fingers which are playing the octaves should, on the contrary, remain almost continuously in contact with the surface of the keys without ever altering their stretch.

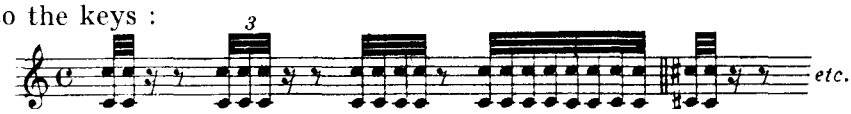
An even and perfect playing will be obtained by a sort of vibration — almost imperceptible — of the hand, a series of very short and strictly identical movements, whatever the dynamics.

To facilitate the quick and continuous rebound of the right hand regularly coming back to its starting point, keep the fingers rather stiff in opposition to the extreme flexibility of the wrist.

The forearm should be rather firm, the upper arm to the shoulder as relaxed as possible : both are passive here and should only serve to support the hand above the keyboard. In order to increase the tone, it will be sufficient to contract a little more firmly the fingers which are playing the octaves, of course without stiffening the wrist.

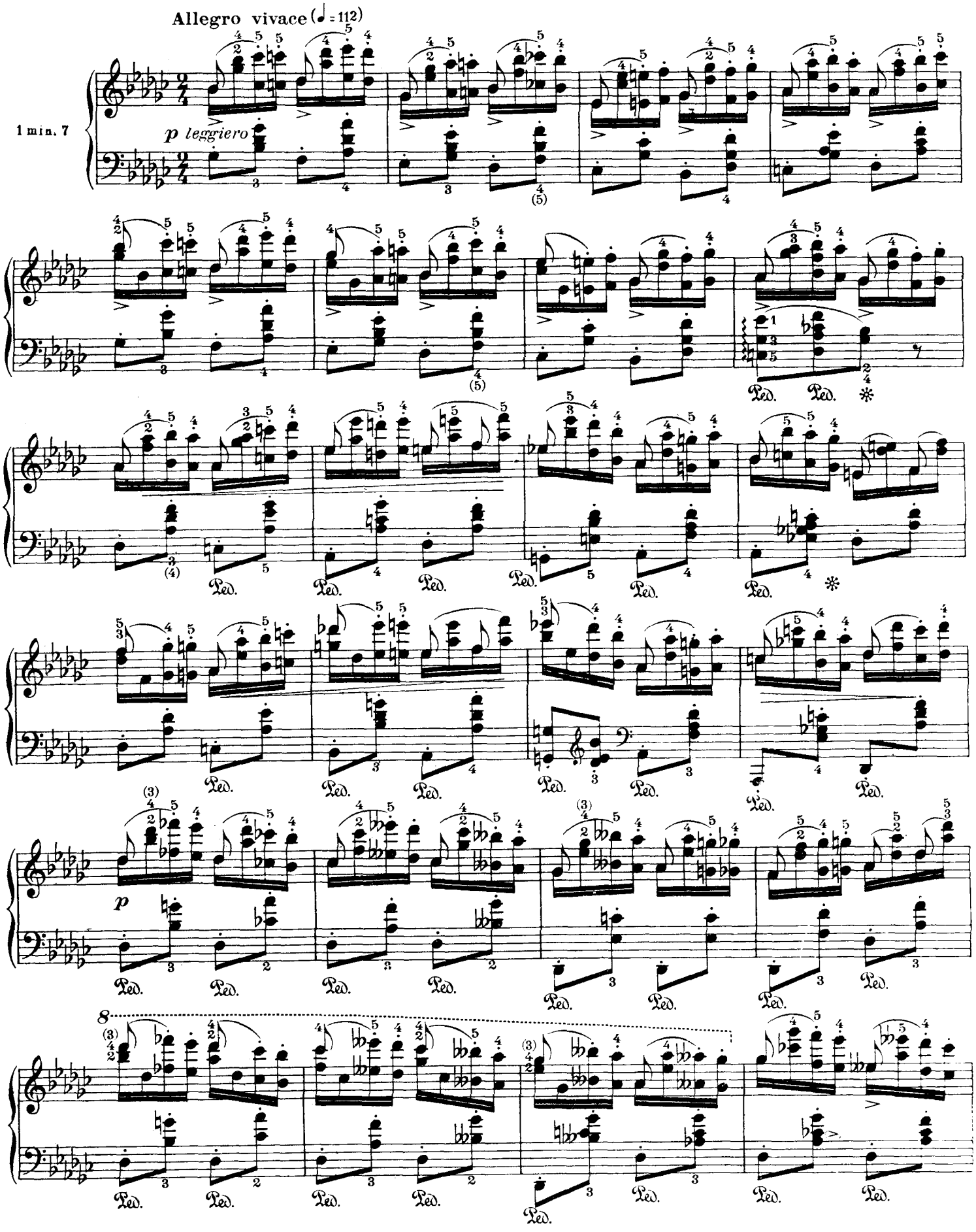
As a preliminary exercise for the rebound-movement, we recommend practising the following formulae, attacking very close to the keys :

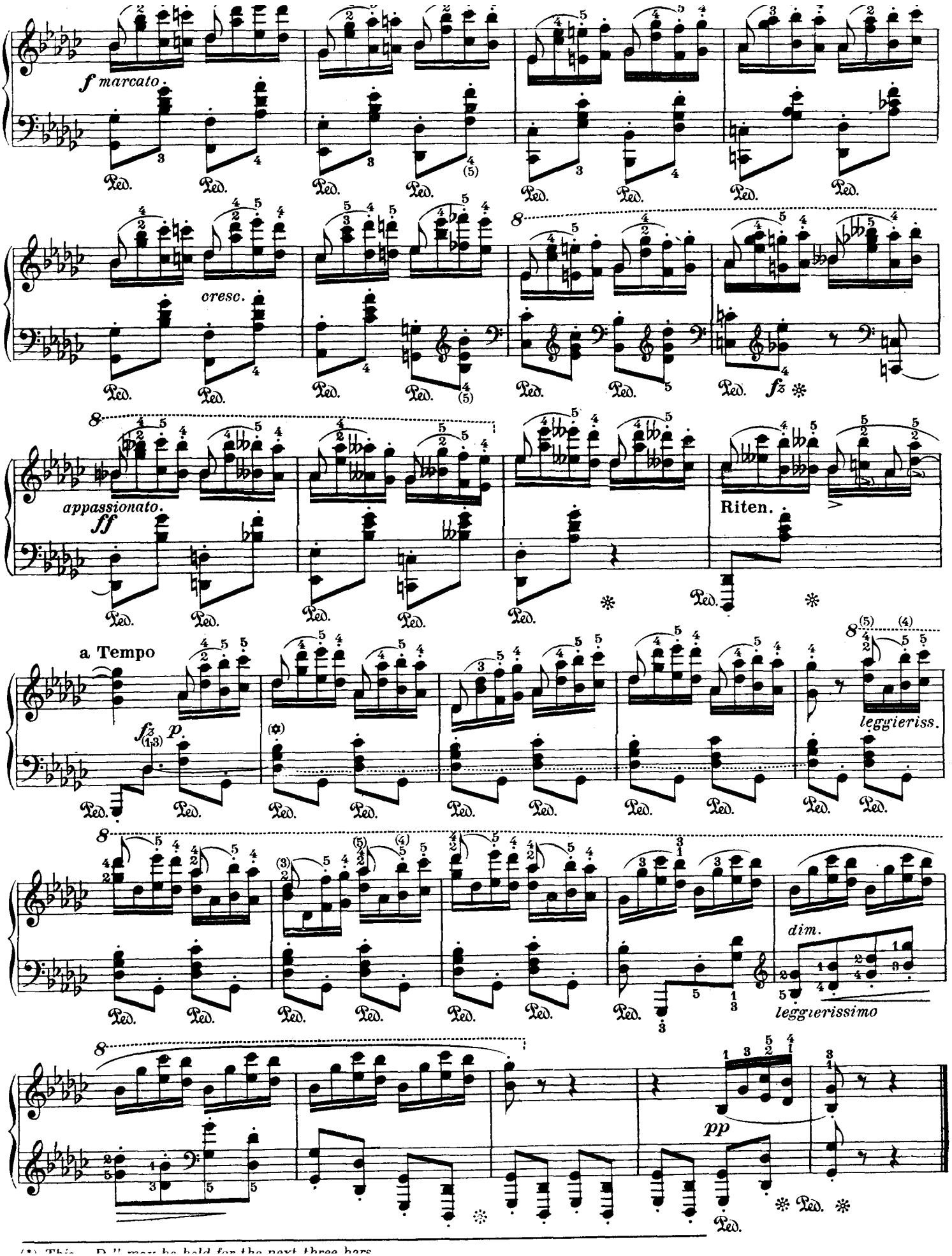
For both hands :



STUDY IN F

(Op. 25)




f marcato.
cresc.
appassionato.
ff
fz
Riten.
a Tempo
p.
leggieriss.
dim.
leggierissimo
pp
Ped.

STUDY N° 10

(Op. 25)

The preliminary work for this Study will be devoted firstly to the wrist-movements which govern the playing of legato octaves, secondly to the independence of the fingers.

The flexibility of the wrist-movements required by octave-playing is so obvious that we think it needless to stress the point. But we do need to explain how the mechanism of these movements, which offer practically no difficulty in the case of detached octaves, become quite a different and more complicated problem when finger-action is added to octave-playing : indeed, finger-action which does not exist — so to speak — in the first case, here becomes most important.

In our opinion, the wrist-movements required for a perfect legato playing of octaves may be divided into three categories.

1° Suspension-movements, i.e. alternate raising and lowering of the wrist, the fingers which are playing the octaves remaining on the keys.

2° Backward and forward-movements, from the black keys to the white ones — and vice-versa.

3° Lateral shifting-movements, up or down the keyboard.

Properly speaking, the movements of the first category are not strictly indispensable to legato octave-playing. Nevertheless, there is no performer — possessing a high-class technique — who does not employ them — even though unawares. We shall therefore endeavour to explain their usefulness and how and when they may be applied.

When analysing Study N° 3 (Op. 10), we had the occasion to observe that in certain cases, in playing a progression of notes, one could replace the actual legato by a sort of fictitious legato obtained thanks to a perfect uniformity of tone.

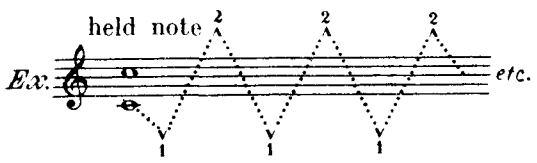
The use of this type of legato is exactly suited to the thumb-part of the octaves in this Study, however, for the illusion to be complete, it is necessary to balance the tone of the thumb with that of the finger-part of the octaves which can be fingered — and consequently played with real legato.

This can be achieved by slightly emphasizing the tone of the fingered part, whatever the dynamics — but especially when playing ***p*** and, at the same time, by making a less forcible attack with the thumb.

However, this kind of exercise demands of the performer a muscular strain contrary to his natural aptitudes, as indeed it requires a greater expenditure of strength of the weaker fingers, in spite of the thumb being pre-eminently the stronger.

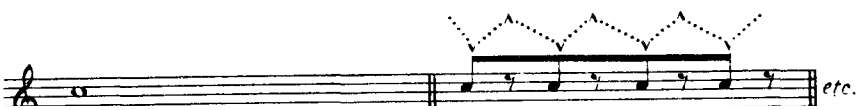
And this leads us back to the suspension movements previously mentioned, which, by allowing the performer to distribute the weight of his hand at will between the different fingers, gives him the possibility to counteract their unequal force, to increase the strength of the 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers, to lighten the thumb by keeping up its mobility and flexibility, to link up — so to speak — in one easy supple motion muscular efforts which are in opposition.

First of all, in order to get accustomed to these movements, practise them on one held octave, counting *one* when lowering the wrist, and *two* when raising it :

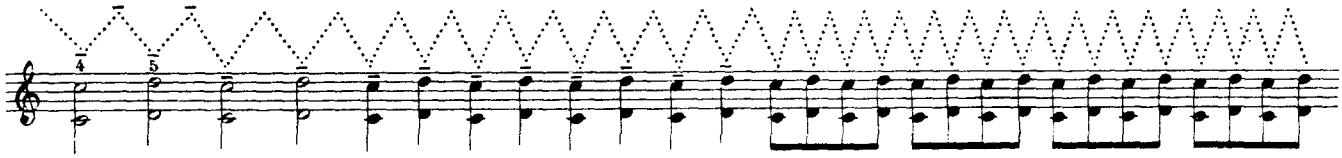


Repeat the movements gradually quicker and quicker, but pay attention they do not decrease in size.

Next, practise holding one note of the octave and letting the repetition of the other note coincide with the lowering movement.



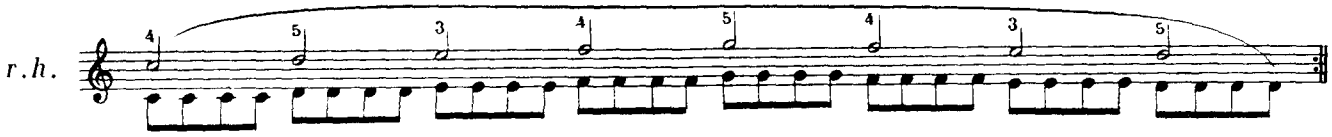
Further, practise the octave-legato :



Same practice for the two hands separately with three, four, five-note combinations up to chromatic and diatonic scales in every key.

Next, the same formulae, but with repeat of the thumb for both hands, in order to develop its mobility.

Example on five notes :



Be careful that the attack made with the thumb should always coincide with the lowering movement of the wrist. For the left hand, inverse the fingerings. Practise this exercise *pp*, *mf* and *f*.

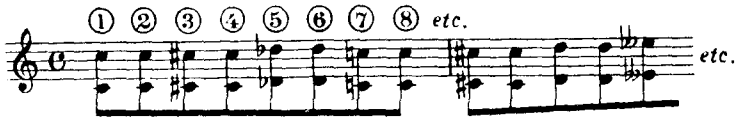
More strength will be obtained, not only by bringing more weight to bear on the wrist and forearm, but also by gradually increasing the muscular firmness of the fingers playing the octaves.

When, thanks to these exercises, the student has acquired a flexibility of the wrist sufficient to allow of playing a two-octave scale, in rather quick tempo, ten times over without strain or heaviness, he will turn his attention to the movements of the second category.

The latter are the « drawer » movements, mentioned in Study N° 8 (Op. 25). They will facilitate the displacement of the hand while shifting from the white keys to the black, and vice-versa. In this latter case, they will ease the sliding of the thumb and thus ensure an almost perfect legato of the two parts.

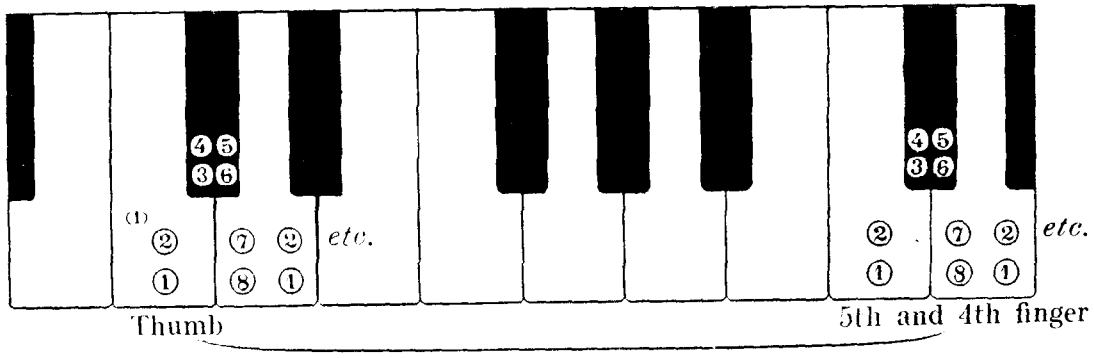
We recommend practising the to-and-fro movements, first of all by dividing the outward movement towards the back of the keyboard — and the inner movement of the wrist returning to its initial position, by a series of slight displacements of the fingers on the same key, thus :

The following example :



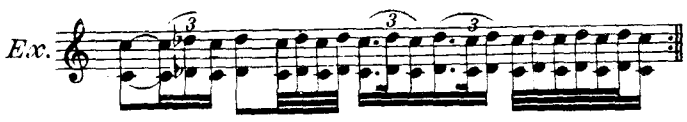
play on chromatically

corresponds on the keyboard to the following finger-positions :

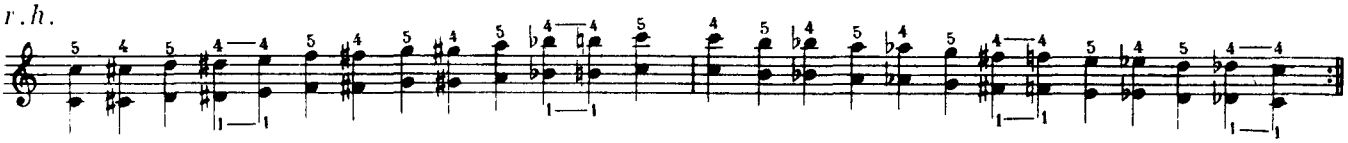


Draw the finger forwards or backwards by a very slight — but precise — movements of the wrist, the hand remaining supple. Practise in the same manner, the disjunct intervals between black and white keys up to the augmented fourth inclusively, gradually quickening the tempo. Go over the same exercises again, using but two displacements on the same key instead of four; next, one move only from the white key to the black — and vice-versa. As the number of displacements are diminished, gradually merge the successive relaxations of the wrist into one single and smoothly-curved movement.

The best formulae to use for practising the to-and-fro movements, independently of the chromatic scale, are trills and shakes with irregular beats.



To complete the foregoing remarks, we advise practising as well the chromatic fingering hereunder, sliding the fingers in both parts of the octave.

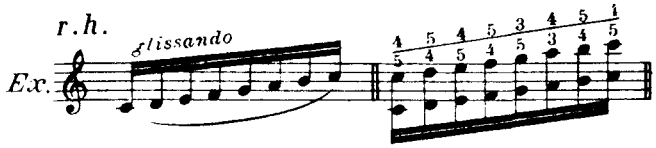


Same exercise for the left hand, but with fingering inversed, sliding on the same degrees.

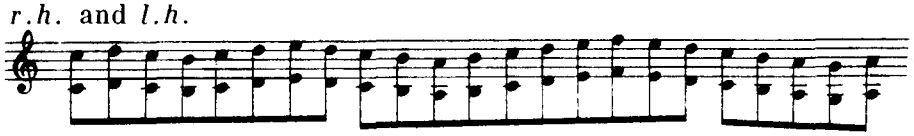
We leave it to the performer to apply this fingering to the text of the Study, or not — in the case when the fingering we suggest is ill-suited to his own physical aptitudes. In fact, we must say that indeed this fingering — which proves excellent for ensuring a quick legato of octaves — is nevertheless better suited (like most sliding fingerings) when playing *p* than *f*

We come now to the third category of wrist-movements, those which conduct the hand up or down the keyboard, which impart more or less swiftness of playing and allow the fingers to be used with the greatest independence for legato playing of the octaves and expressiveness of the phrase.

In order to acquire rapidly, though perhaps not quite fundamentally, the particular mechanism of this wrist-movement, we recommend to practise first of all, glissando scales, in a moderate tempo, employing each finger successively, then, with a lateral movement of the same pace, to play legato octaves on the same length of the keyboard :

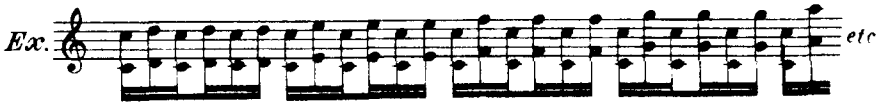


Next, practise in the same manner, descending scales; then, endeavouring to combine ascending and descending progressions by means of the following exercises, which should be transposed into every key :



continually adding a note to both ascending and descending figures.

The impulse given by the wrist at the moment of passing from the ascending to the descending progression, or vice-versa, should come from a supple movement; however, it should be perfectly neat and unhesitating, to acquire which, practising shakes on wide intervals will prove a useful exercise.



play on up to the octave and transpose into every key

During this exercise, the fingers naturally remain in contact with the keyboard. They should — so to speak — only graze the keys, even while playing wide intervals.

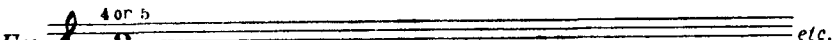
The different manners of increasing the flexibility of the wrist having been duly analysed, for the student who wishes to attain perfection in his playing, now remain to be examined the difficulties relating to the action of the fingers, their mobility and independence.

One of these difficulties, the greatest, in our opinion, consists in the fact that for the needs of legato-playing, the 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers — which play the upper part of the octaves in the right hand, and the lower in the left — constantly cross over each other.

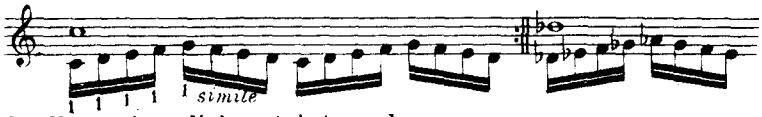
For the appropriate exercises, we refer the student to those suggested for Study N° 2 (Op. 10), which here should be extended to diatonic scale and to arpeggios in all keys.

While practising the above exercises, avoid any motion of the hand; the wrist should however retain an absolute flexibility, and strict legato be observed.

Next, go on to practising the thumb-part. First of all, play with a held note, like a trill, thus :



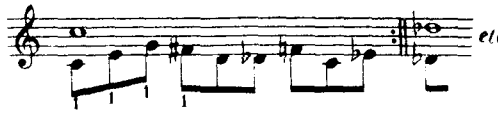
Further, as follows :



and so on chromatically on every degree of the scale

And, finally, using disjunct intervals :

or any other similar formula

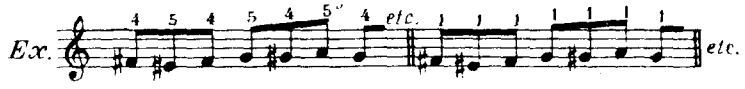


play on chromatically

For the left hand, these same exercises will of course be played inversely. We recommend practising with a held note as this restrains the hand from interfering with the action of the thumb, thus developing the independence and mobility of the latter. The student should endeavour, by progressively quickening the tempo, to attain a great velocity, but without impairing the evenness of tone which should remain unaltered throughout : indeed, even play of the thumb is an essential asset to the legato-playing of octaves.

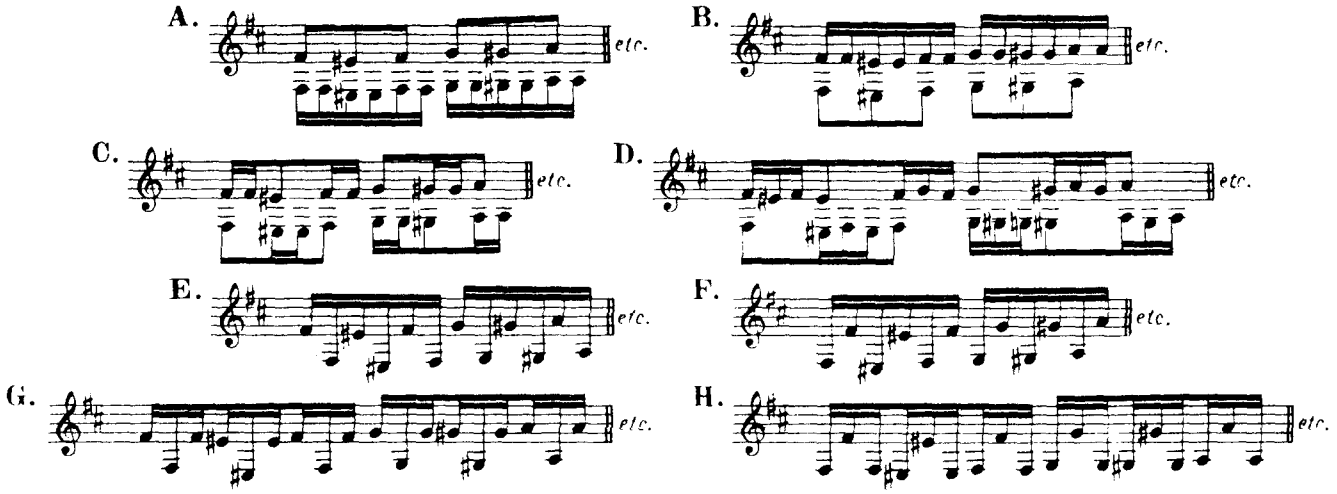
The practice of finger-movements will be profitably completed by practising in both hands separately the upper and lower part of the octaves as written in Chopin's text, paying full attention to the fingerings.

Upper part *r.h.*
or lower part *l.h.* or thumb in both hands



It will be found that these various technical details will ultimately merge so naturally when practising this piece as a whole that the student will be fully repaid for the pains taken to analyse them thoroughly.

Begin the practice of the whole Study by playing the first part in fragments of six or eight bars ; both hands separately, wihout the lower held note, according to the following variants :

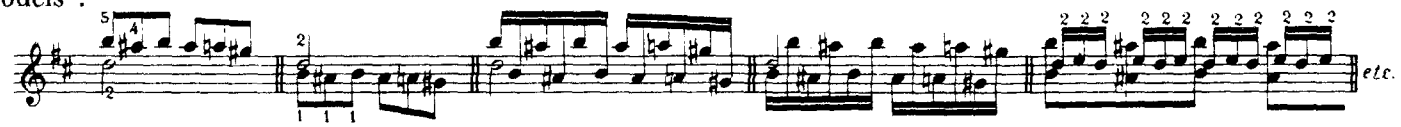


When practising variant **D**, it will prove impossible to hold the quavers, on account of the considerable wide stretches ; they should be replaced by semiquavers followed by semiquaver rests.

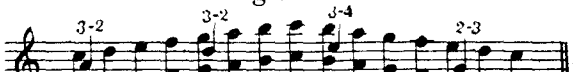
Practise also with the following rhythms :

In order that the wrist and forearm may retain absolute flexibility, we recommend to play the passage under notice, now and again with equal values, broadly detaching each note.

For combining the octaves and inner held notes, we suggest practising exercises according to the following models :



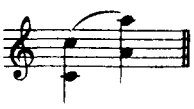
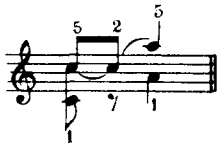
As well as scales similar to the following :

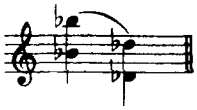
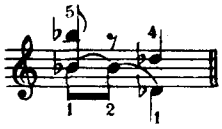


to be transposed

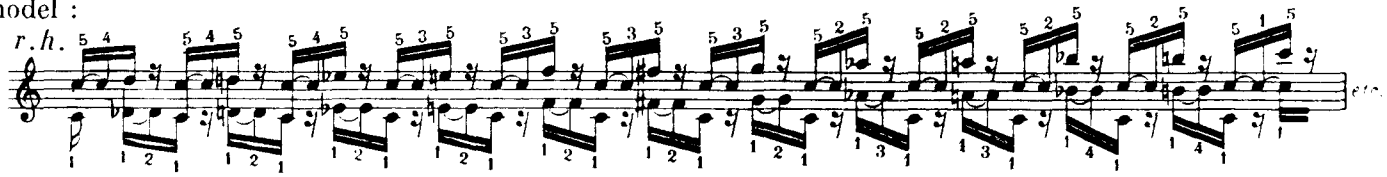
The vehemence and the stormy outbreak of the 28 opening bars and of the latter part of the Study should, in the intermezzo, give way to an expressive, almost confidential, tone and feeling. Here, the wrist will no more play the active part which a swifter execution imposes on it, but by its flexibility and by transfering with delicate precision the weight of the forearm to the fingers, it will aid the latter to trace unfalteringly the melodic outline. Be careful to keep the fingers very close to the keys, the upper fingers slightly trailing on the keys and the thumb gliding up or down the keyboard. Give full attention to make the necessary expressive accent on the inner notes.

For legato-playing of octaves on distant keys in slow tempo, use so-called « subtitution » fingering.

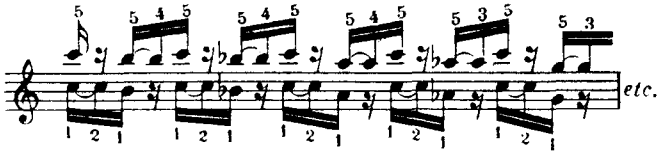
Ex.  must be played thus : 

or :  must be played thus : 

Therefore, we advise to practise on every degree of chromatic scale, exercises similar to the following model :



The same in descending progression :



For the left hand, reverse the fingerings.

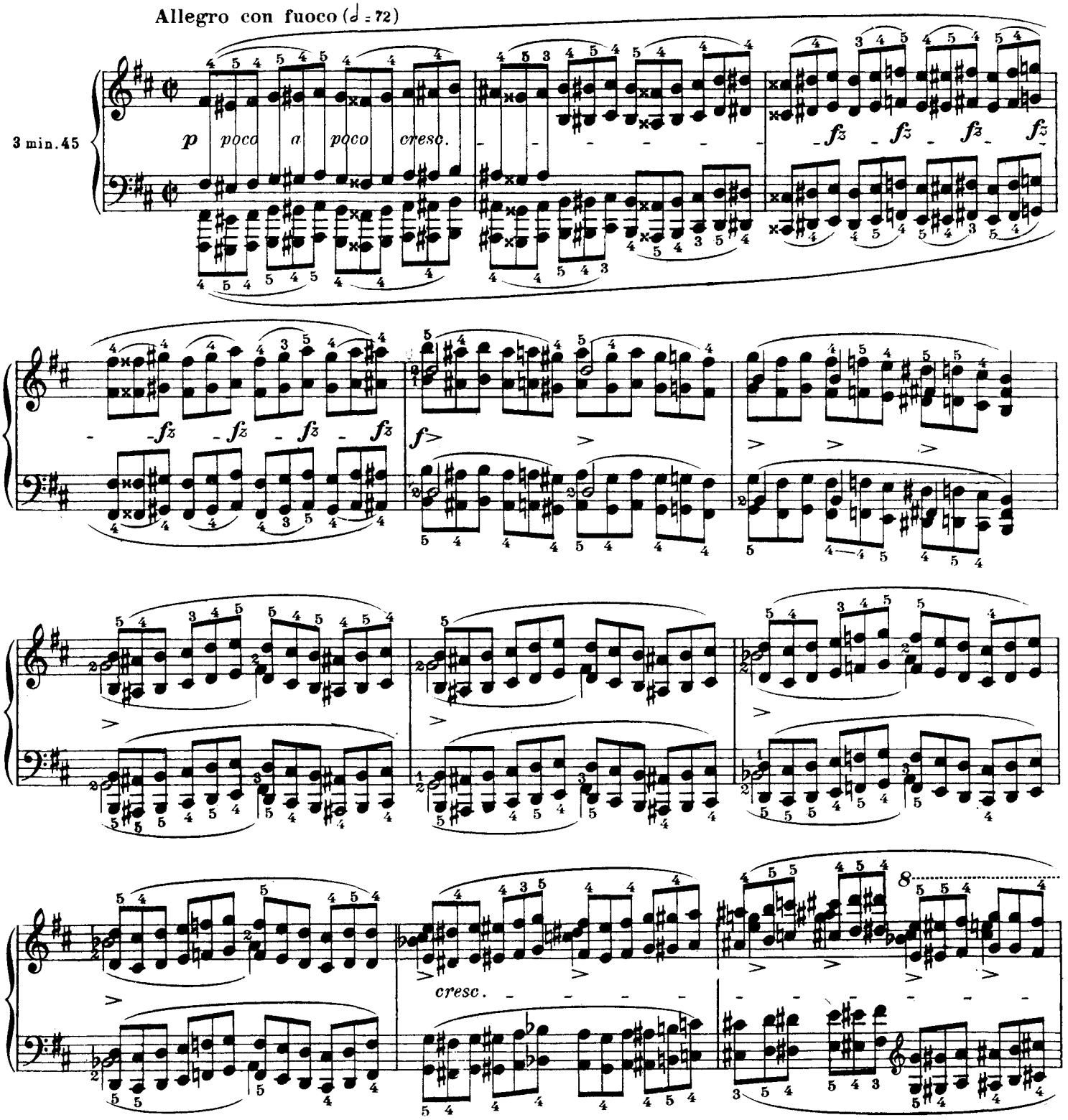
We do not consider it possible to give any definite directions as to the use of the pedal for this Study, as it is too closely dependent on the quality of the instrument used and the manner of interpreting. As a general rule, the sustaining pedal does not require changing as often in the upper register of the piano as in the lower one.

Before closing this lesson, we recommend that utmost attention should be paid to ensuring a strictly simultaneous attack of the two notes of each octave, as the least carelessness in this respect might entail spoiling completely the quality of the final execution.

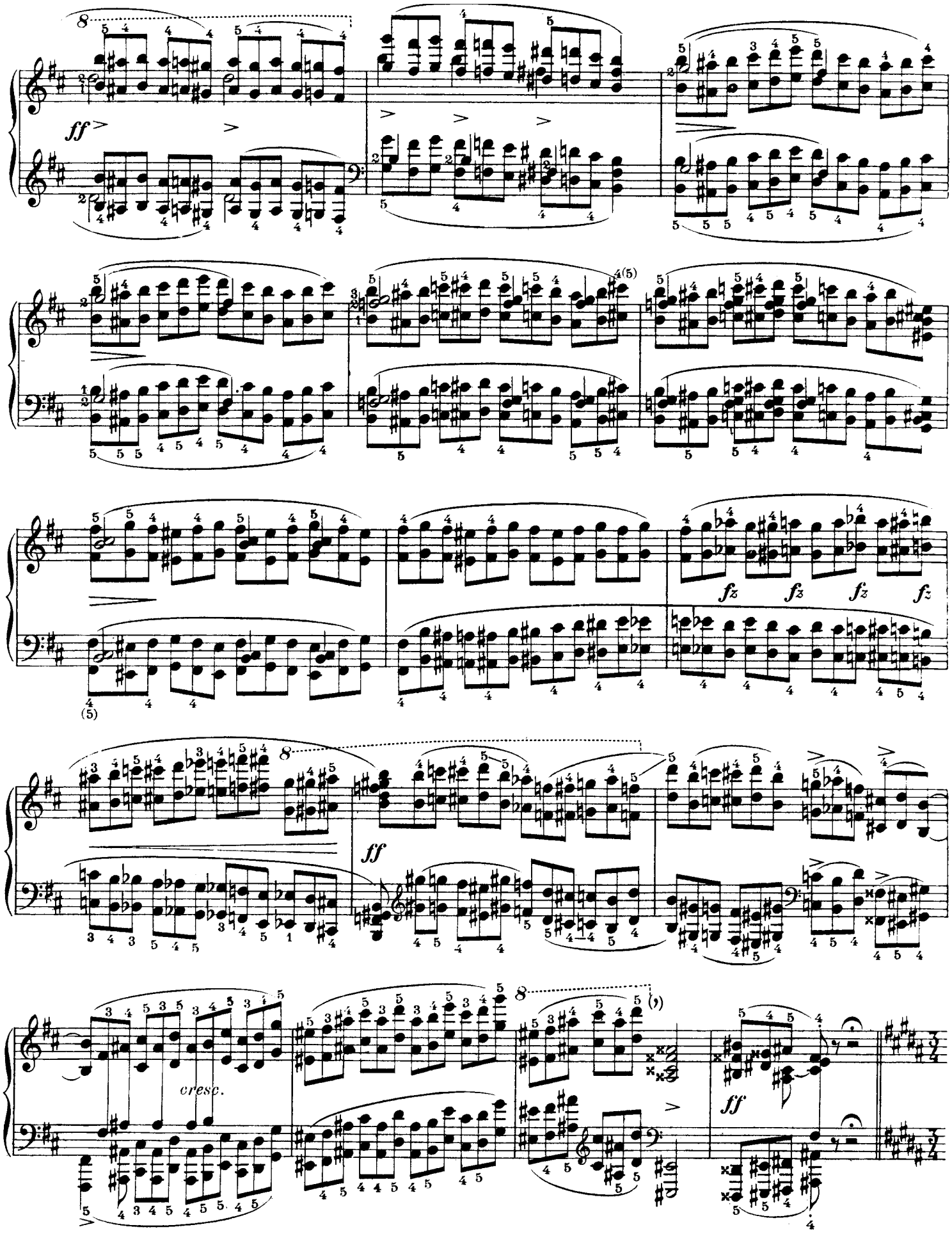
ALFRED CORTOT

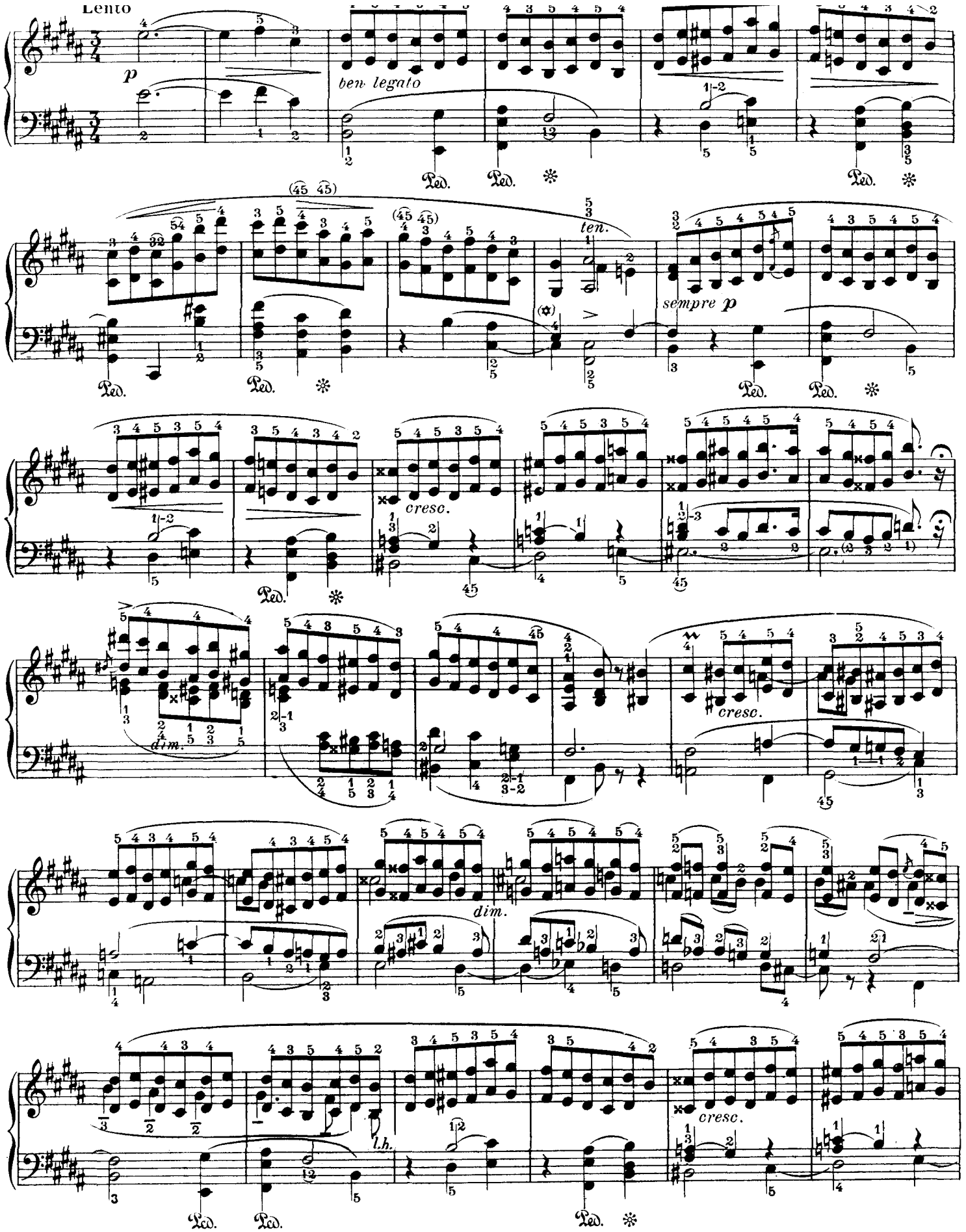
STUDY N° 10

(Op. 25)

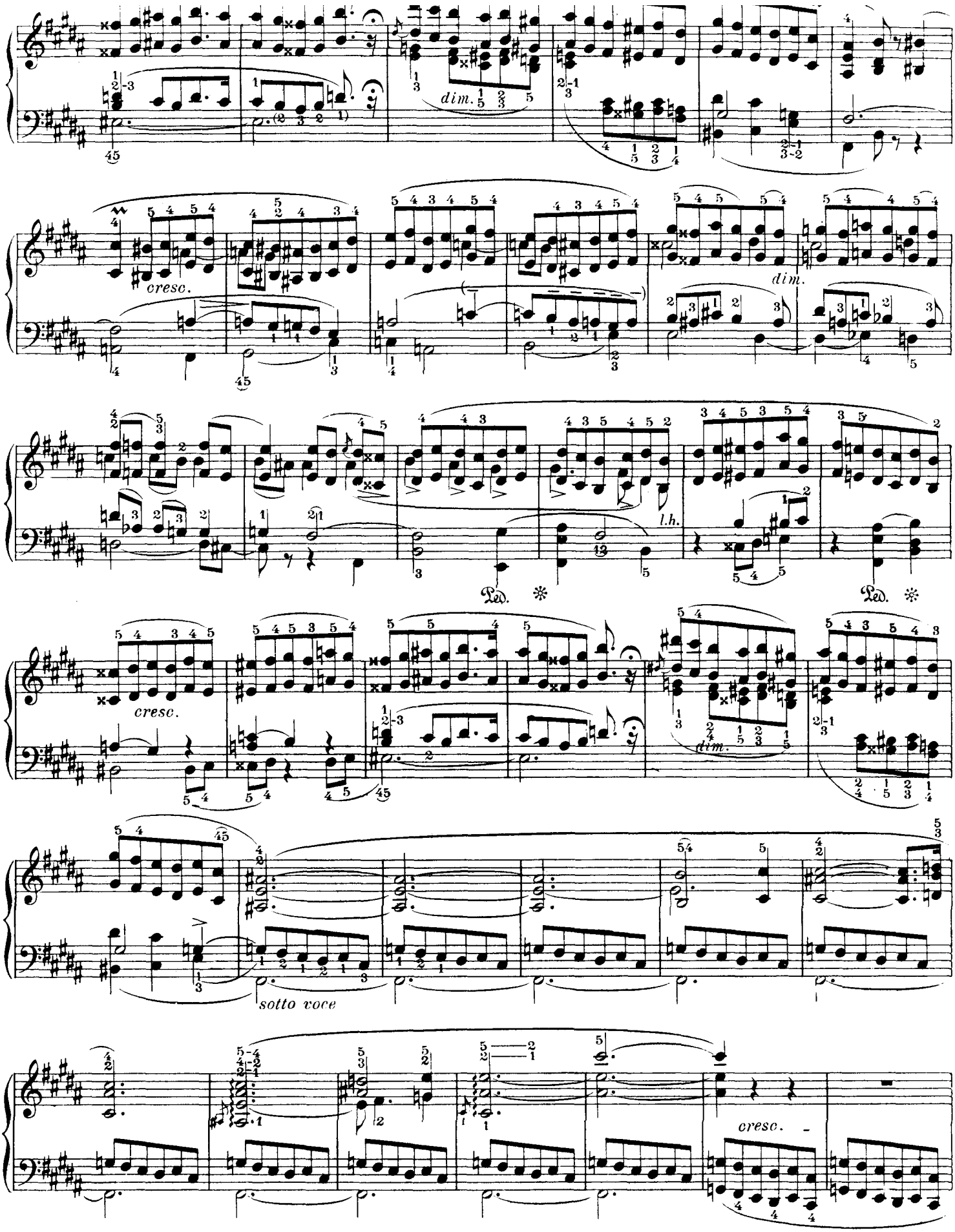


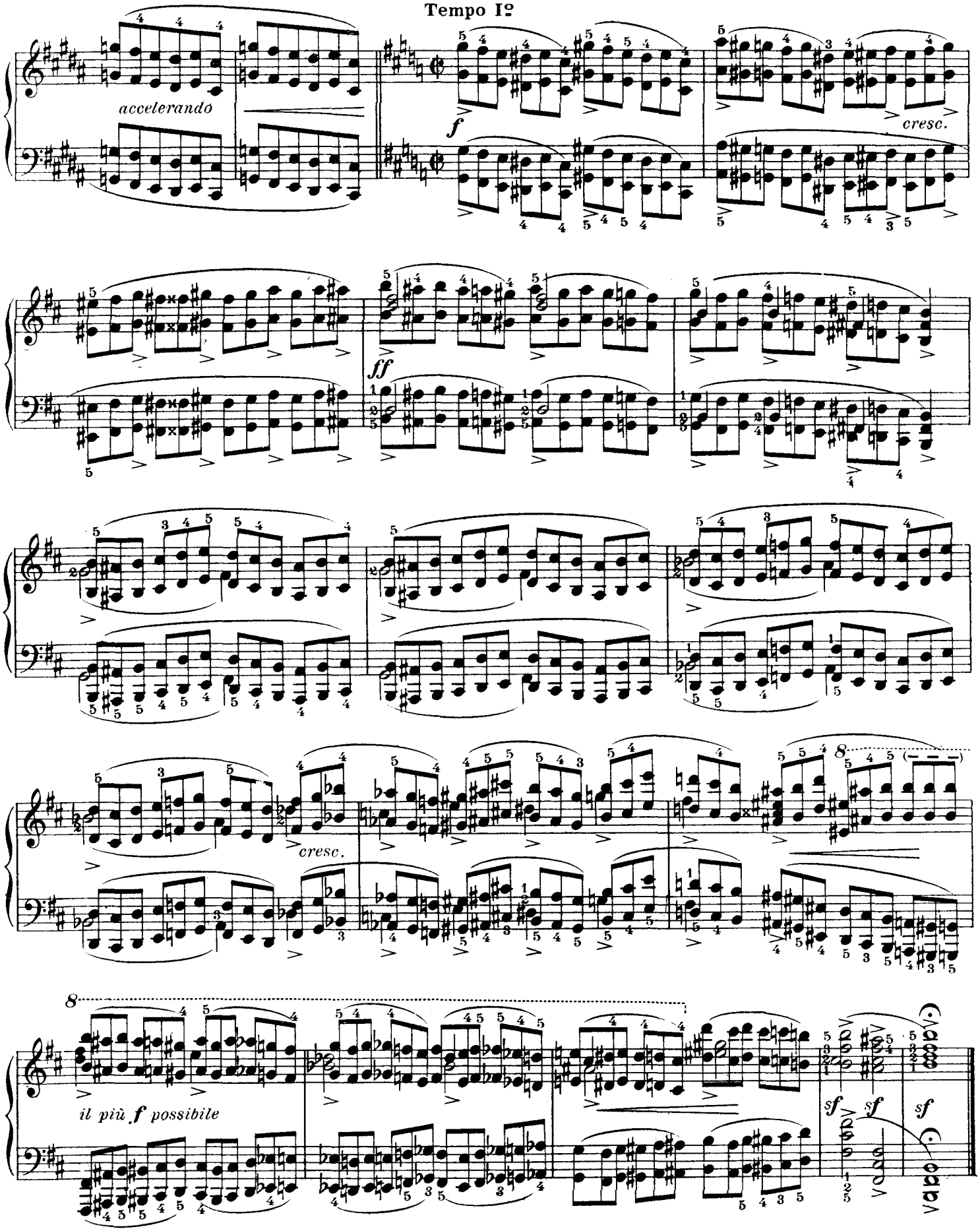
(*) We have selected for this Study the fingering which ensures the best octave-legato. However, on account of the constant use of the


ff
fz fz fz fz
ff
cresc.
ff



(*) Mikuli has the „ E " in the left hand.


dim.
cresc.
dim.
l.h.
Ped.
Ped.
cresc.
dim.
sotto voce
cresc.


Tempo Iº
accelerando
f
cresc.
ff
cresc.
8
8
il più f possibile
sf
sf
sf

STUDY N° 11

(Op. 25)

The technical formula which serves as frame to this Study proves that the composer wished the student to work out one particular difficulty demanding a special kind of practice which would develop both strength and agility of the fingers.

But Chopin's genius widened — maybe unawares — the limited scope of a Study written for perfecting mechanical assets to the infinite horizon of a work of art; indeed, he transforms the figure played by the right hand into an overwhelming and tempestuous flood of sound severely kept under control by the unrelenting rhythm of the bass. Such a stormy and splendid vitality run through these pages that the performer is not only faced with a technical problem, but is compelled to translate a musical poem as well.

And here we may notice that, by a sort of reaction, it is in striving to render the breath-taking force of this Study, rather than by merely trying to achieve its perfect technical execution, that we shall appreciate its essential value for the furthering of pianistic progress.

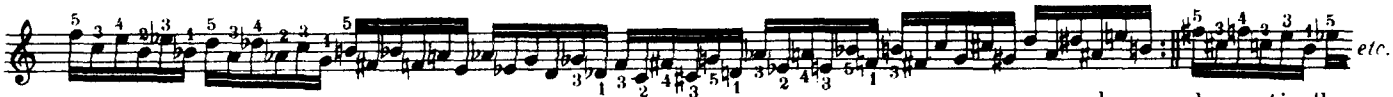
Thus, by endeavouring to find the proper colouring for the figure in semiquavers — which should at times give the impression of the uproar and crash of the storm, and at other times, the mysterious ominous sound of water roaring in the dark — the fingers will acquire a maximum of independence of action and intensity of tone.

In the effort to outline distinctly these various waves of sound, the weaker and the stronger fingers — constantly opposed — will obtain evenness and blend their action into a legato from which the student may derive profitable teaching.

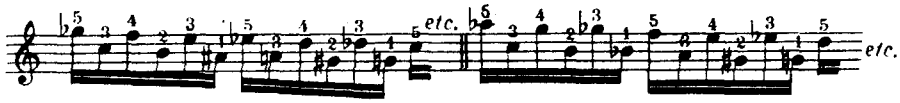
And finally, by being compelled to bring out the vehement and fiery character of this work, the performer will learn how to control his effort, how to eliminate all failings or blemishes, how to conquer strain, and will render this composition with bravura and authotity — all of which he might not have achieved if he had merely worked out the technical difficulties of the piece.

Therefore, the preliminary exercises we suggest are not only meant to overcome the difficulties pertaining to the outline of the figure, but they are such as will help to ensure the necessary control of the dynamic fluctuations.

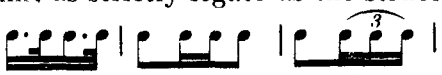
First of all, for the fingers to acquire equal strength and get accustomed to play extensions perfectly legato, we recommend the following exercises :



play on chromatically

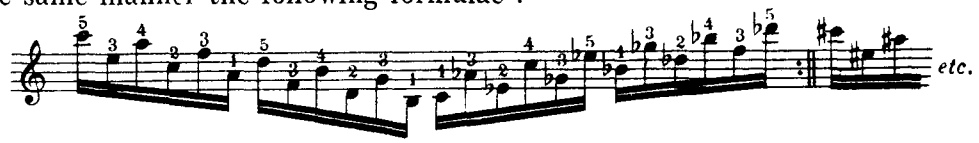


Practise with the following rhythms, as strictly legato as the structure of the hand will permit :



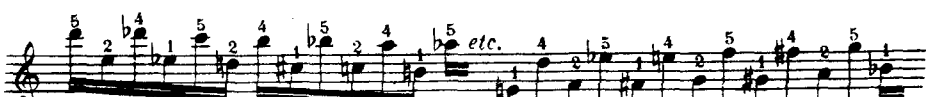
Use also these fingerings : 5241 - 5341 - 5231 - 4231. Gradually quickening the tempo, and applying throughout the above exercises and the next, the following dynamics >< or <> constantly varying their starting and finishing points, so that shorter or longer passages should be played successively with different dynamics.

Practise in the same manner the following formulae :

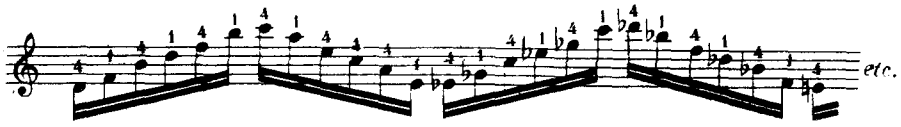


Other fingerings : 5241 - 1425 - 3152 - 1325.

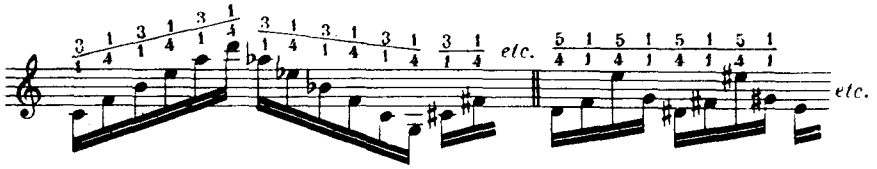
Then :



Next, in order to prepare the bars in which the thumb passes under in disjunct positions :

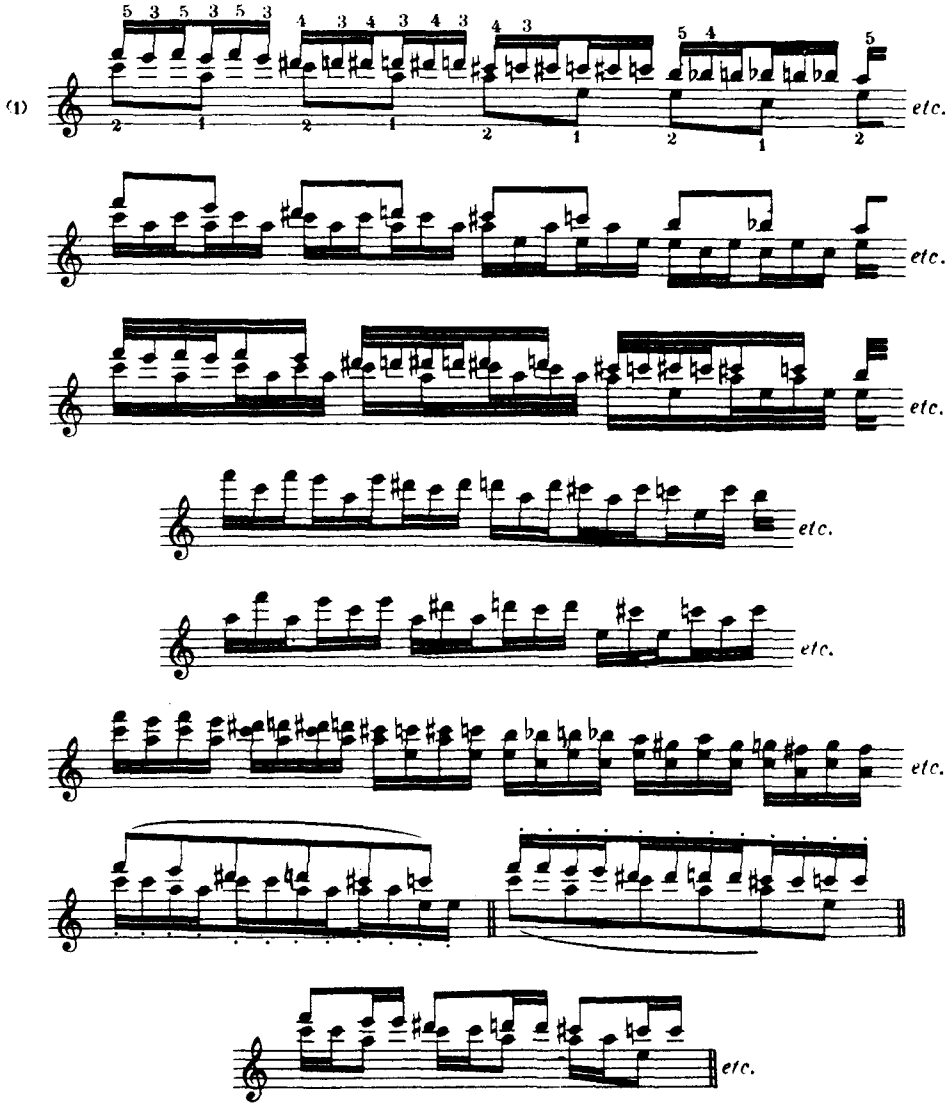


Other fingerings : 3131 - 5151, with the same rhythms and dynamics as above.
Other formulae for the passing under of the thumb :



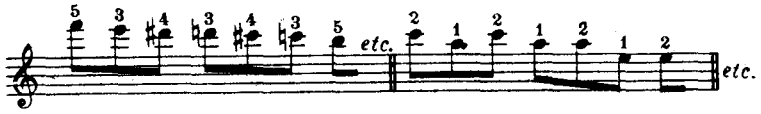
Practise all the foregoing exercises in two different manners : either exaggerating the swaying of the hand entailed by the finger-progression — or, on the contrary, endeavouring to keep the hand almost completely motionless, the wrist, however, remaining quite flexible throughout both exercises.

Then, begin practising the Study itself by playing it in fragments of eight or ten bars according to the outline of the figure, employing the following variants :



(1) In this variant, the 5th bar and similar ones of the Allegro will be played thus :

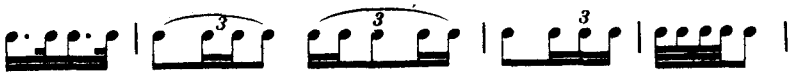
Practise the upper and the lower part of the figure separately.



Employing the following rhythms :

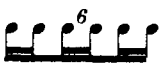
Keep the hand completely motionless during the latter exercises : strength should come from the fingers *only*.

Next, practise the figure as it is written, but with the following rhythms :



and with dynamics throughout. We repeat that this is the true manner to obtain an even mechanism for this Study. Transpose a semitone higher.

We do not advise raising the fingers in any forcible way, as this would impair the quality of the legato and slacken the run of the figure. Great care should be taken to leave the fingers in contact with the keys as long as possible.

The rhythmical outline of the figure calls for each sextolet to being mentally divided not into two groups of three, but into three goups of two, thus :  and not : However, accenting alternately with these two rhythms will prove a most satisfactory exercise for developing strength of the fingers, as well as for ensuring the complete independence of the two hands.

We recommend to carefully note the fingerings of the theme played by the left hand; they are suggested with a view to attain a performance as broad and moving as possible.

The semiquaver-figures in the left hand should be practised according to the models suggested for the right hand. All the figures written for the right hand should be practised by the left hand one octave lower.

We wish to insist again that the student should neglect none of the opportunities afforded by this Study which is so fertile in technical elements, and that he should analyse the latter most thoroughly in order to derive therefrom all didactic benefits possible.

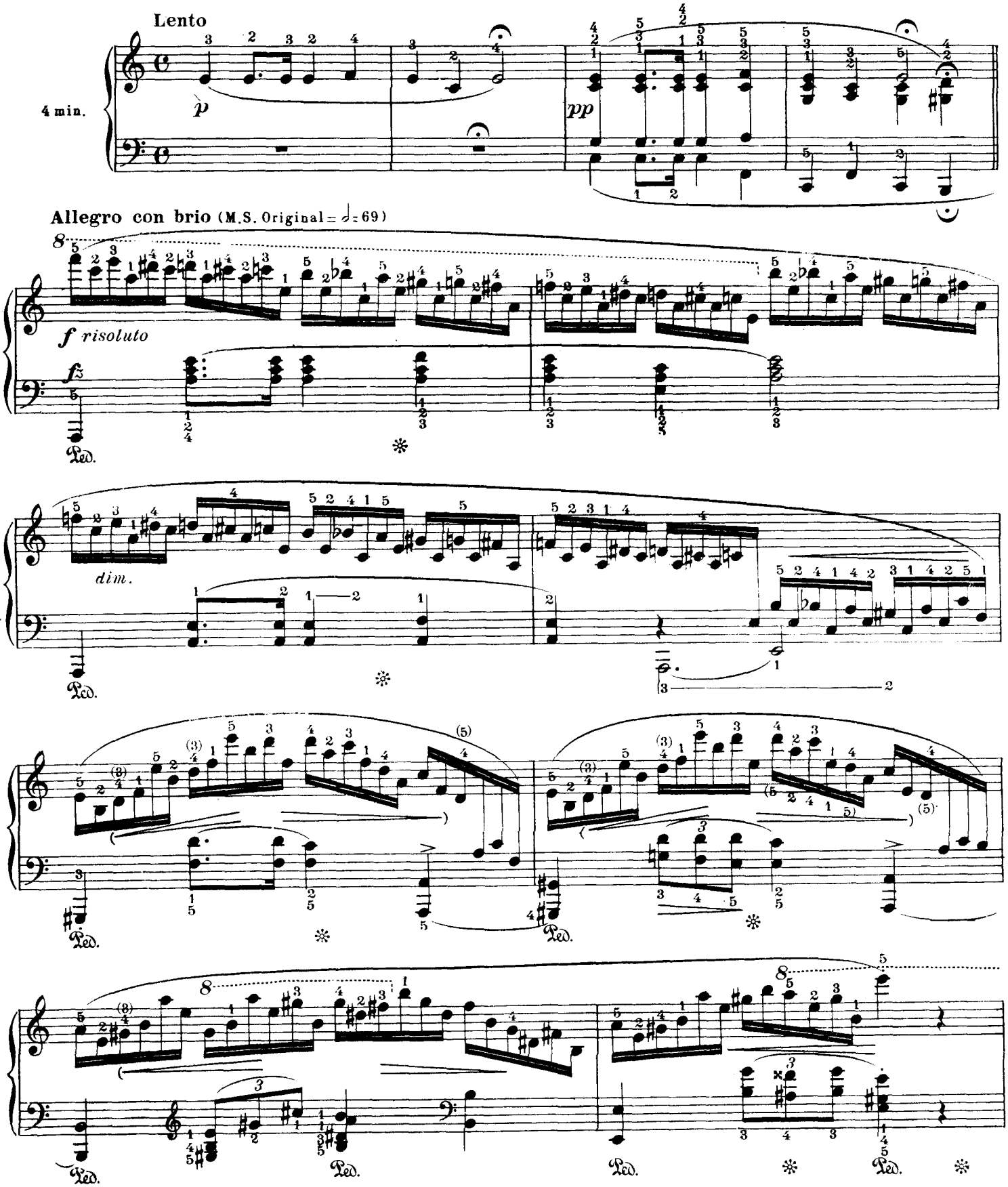
The use of the pedal sensibly applied will help to give this Study the varied and emotional colouring required; but the student should add it only when he feels that he can render the whole range of dynamics necessary to the perfect rendering of this composition by the sole use of his fingers.

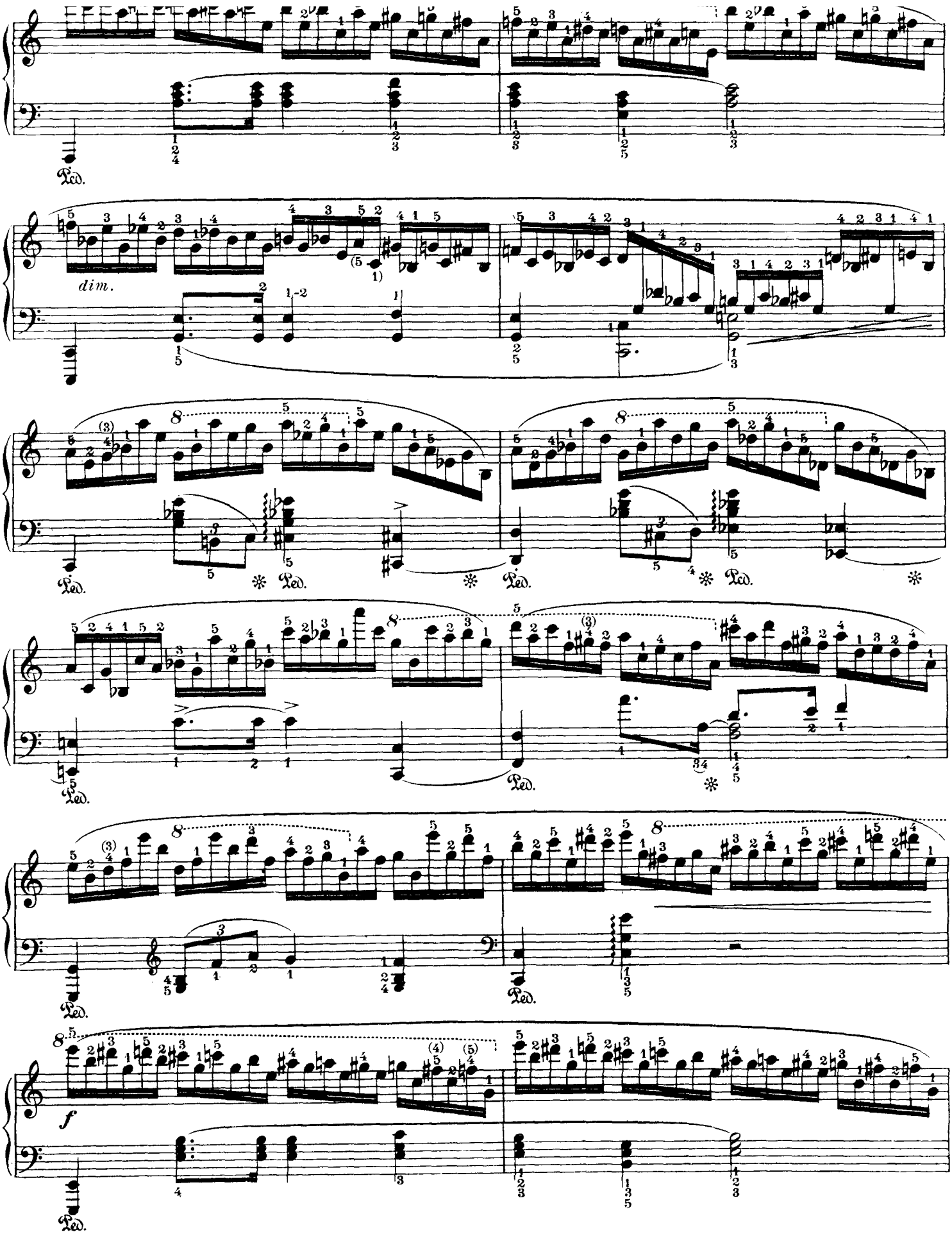
A few of Chopin's editors recommend using the following fingering : 5241 for the right hand figure throughout. We should advise using this uniform succession only as a useful exercise, but *not* for final execution

ALFRED CORTOT

STUDY N° II.

(Op. 25)

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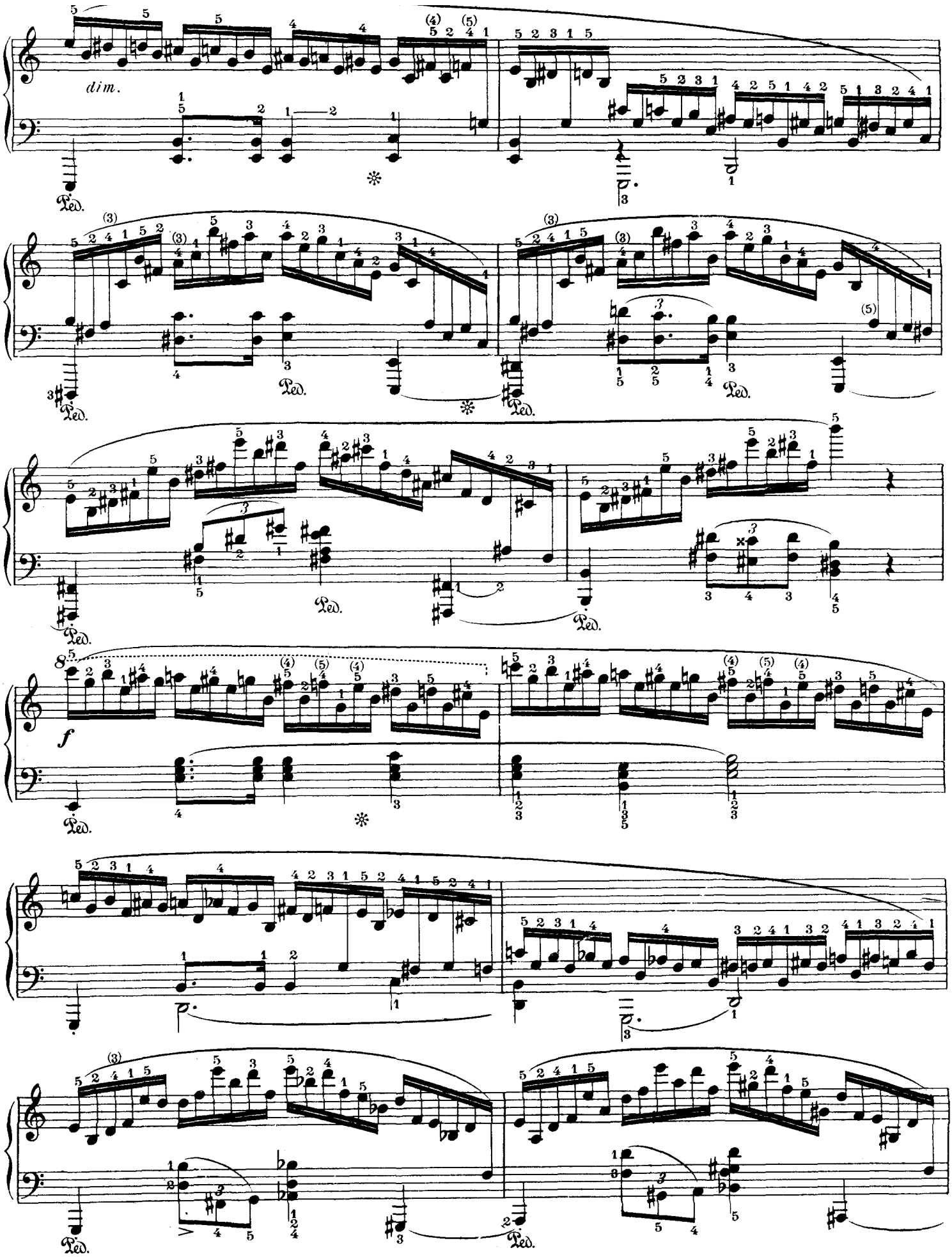
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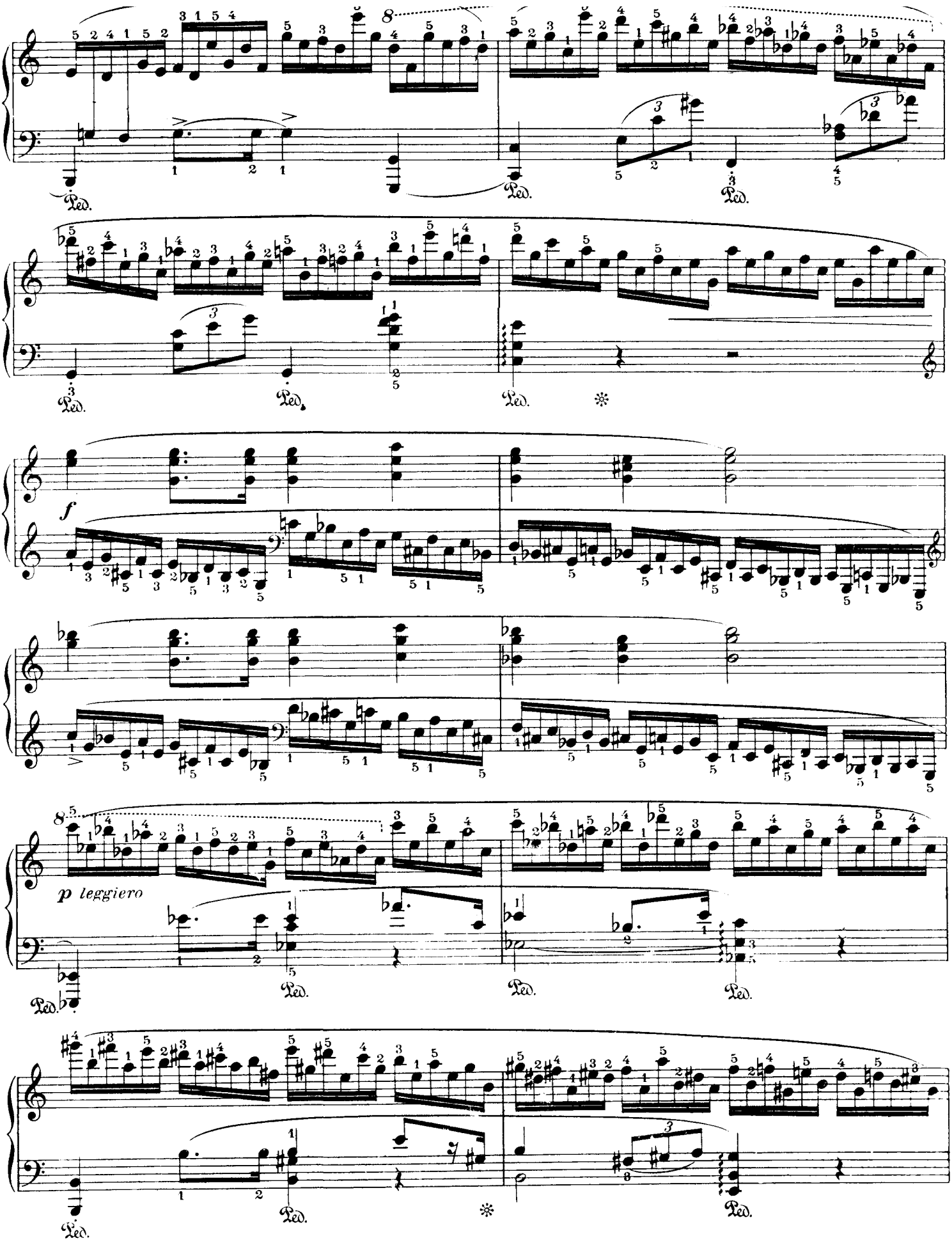
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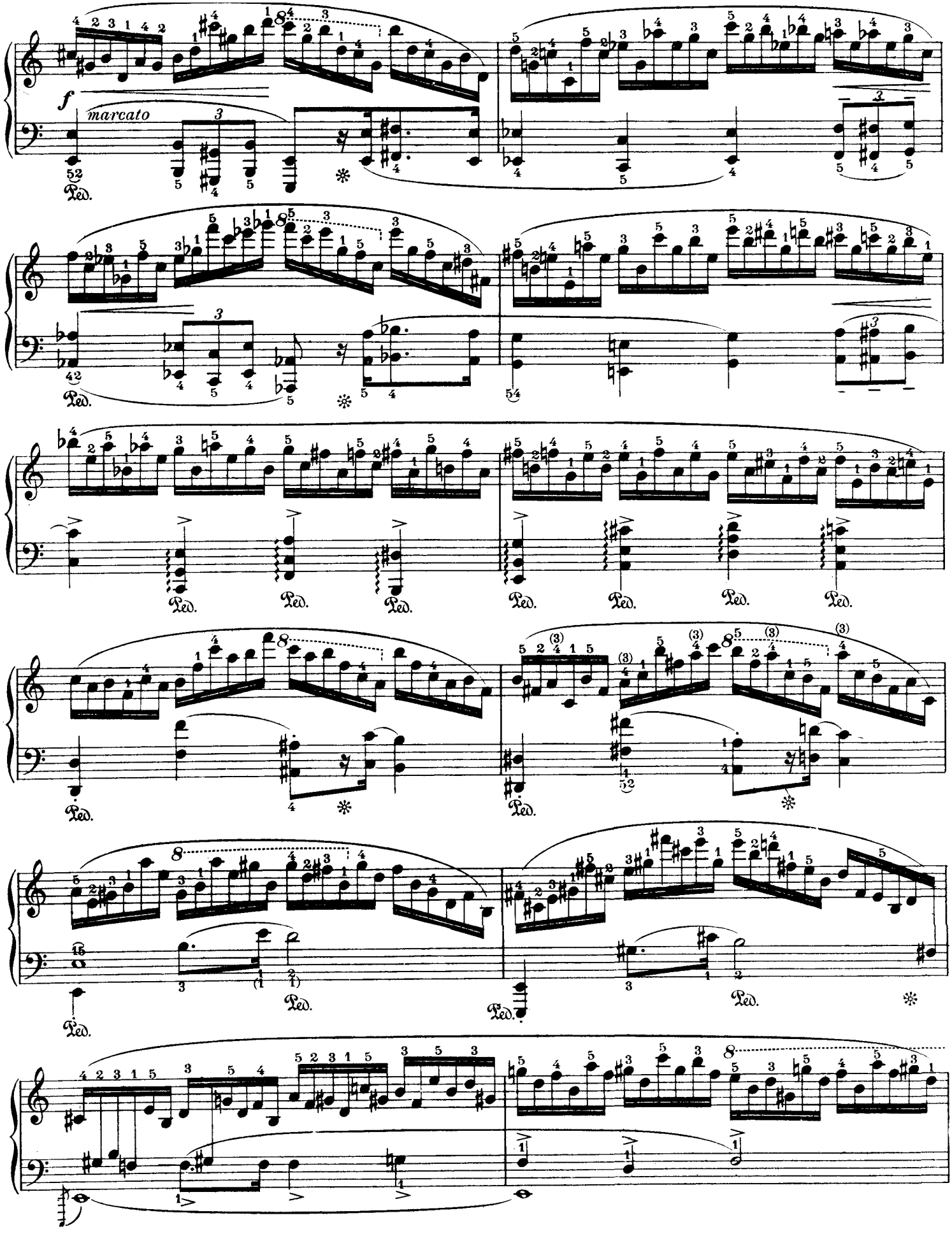
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marcato
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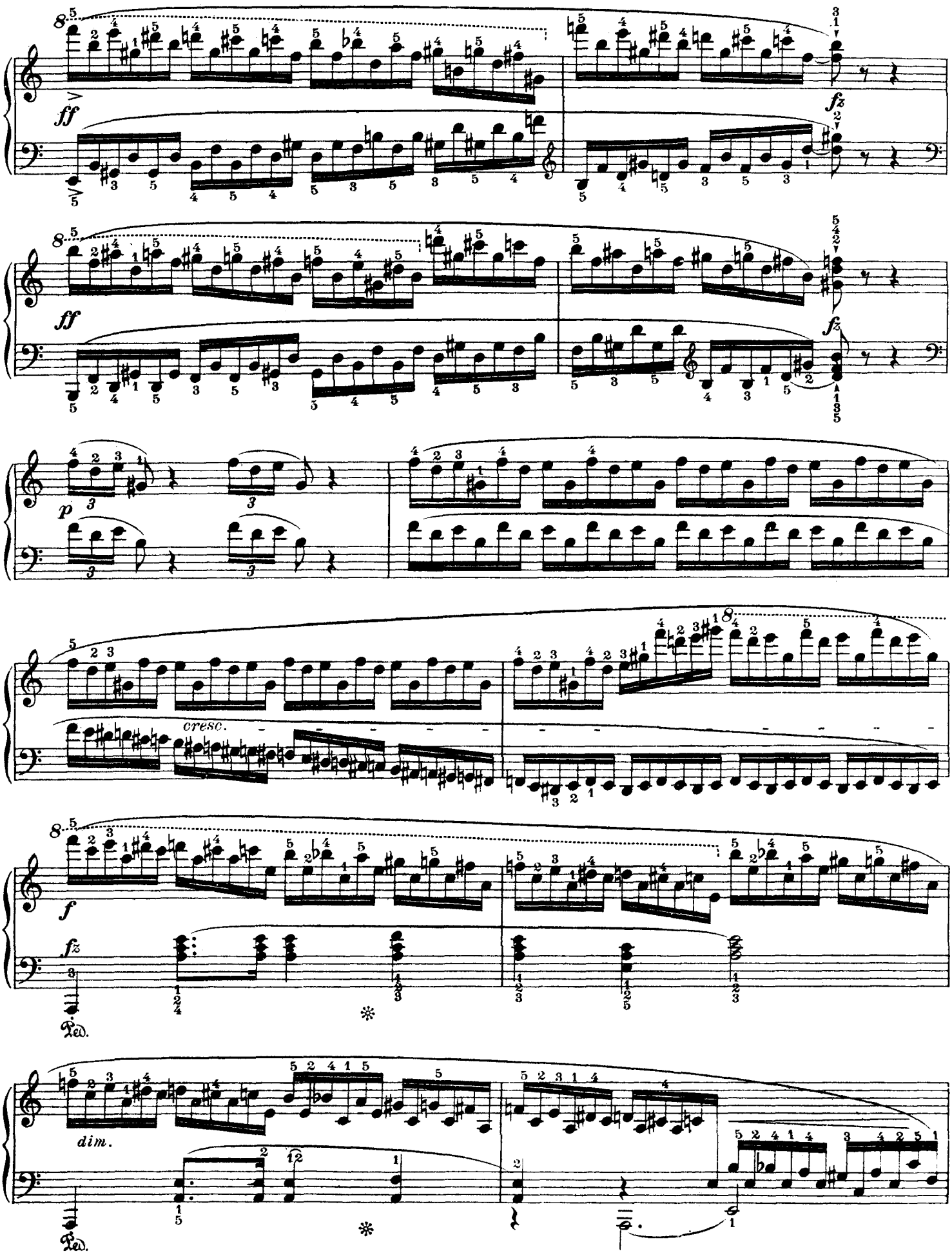
ff
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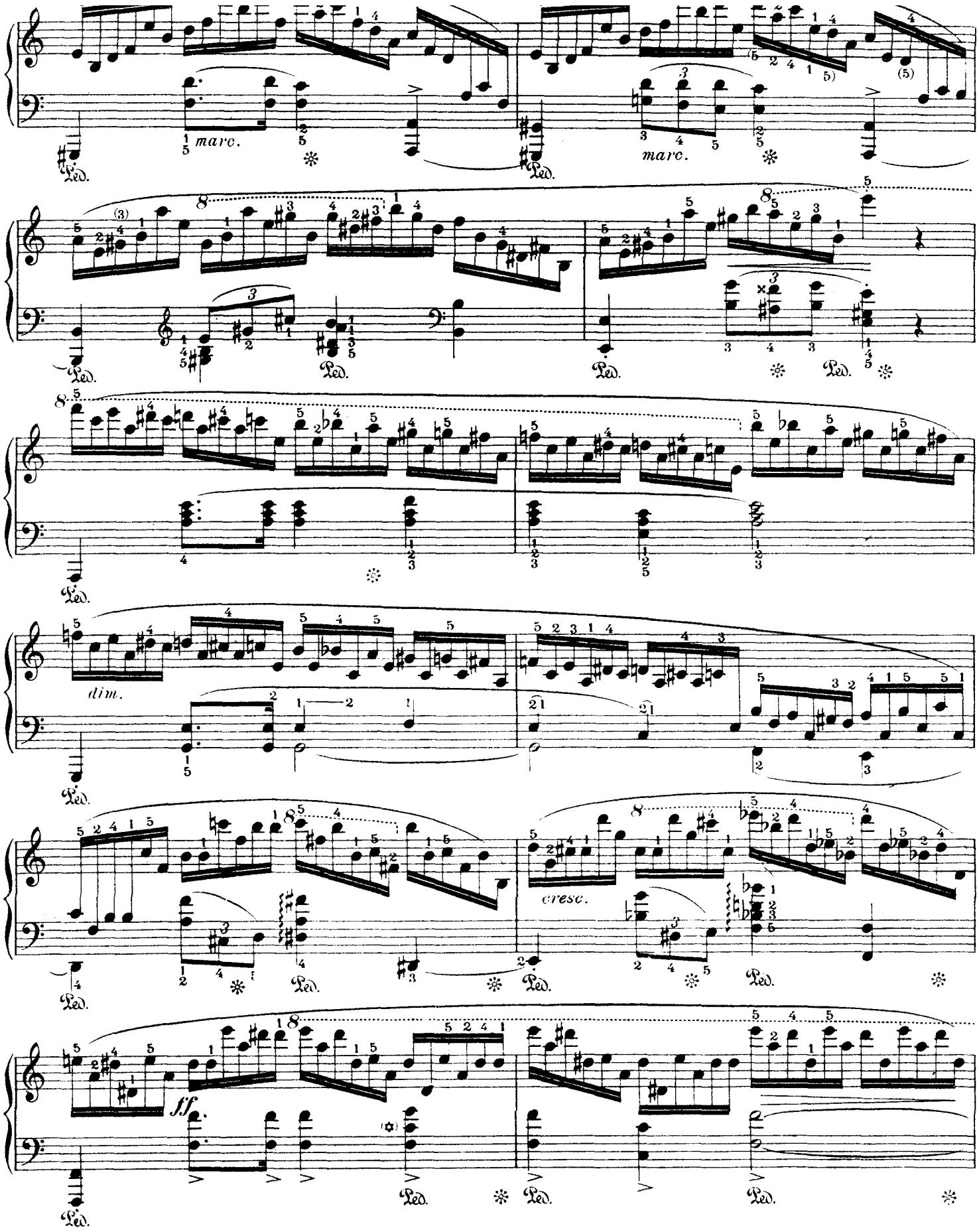
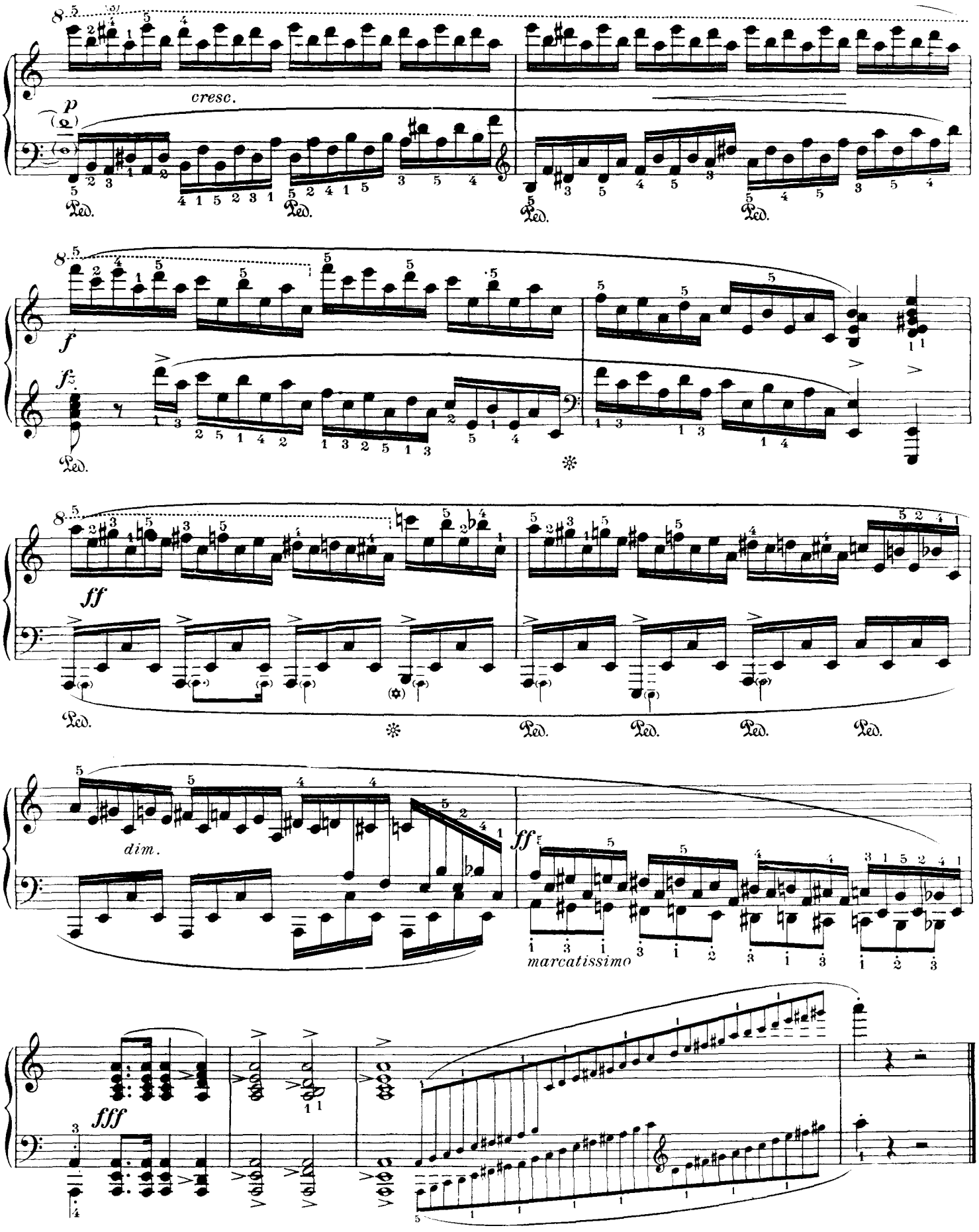
f
fz
Ped.
dim.
Ped.



(*) Only the first French edition mentions this chord as : the original English and German editions both have it thus :



(*) The French edition is also the only one to have the bass B. We recommend the version in small notes which conforms better to the orchestral meaning of the coda.

STUDY N° 12

(Op. 25)

It is said — and dates would appear to support tradition — that Chopin composed this Study, as well as Study N° 12 (Op. 10), in his anguish at hearing the news that Warsaw had fallen into the hands of the Russians. If the legend can certainly add nothing to the intrinsic beauty of these two compositions, it lends them however a particularly pathetic significance.

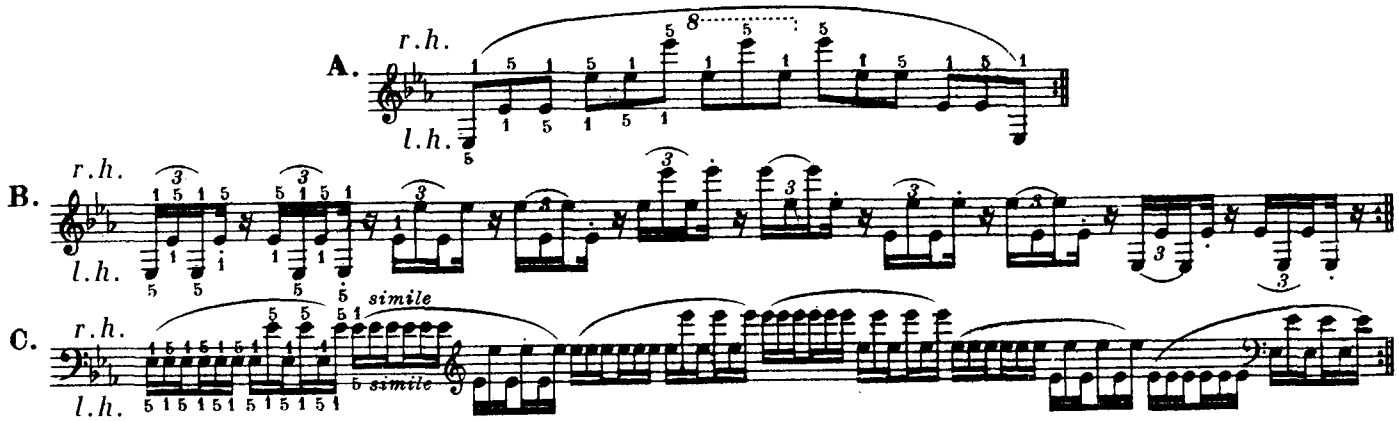
Wounded national pride, grief most sacred, generous outburst of revolt explain perfectly the sublime ardour that sweeps through these pages.

Whether tradition has it correctly or not, the interpretation of these works can be but nobler and vibrate more strongly by taking its inspiration from this source.

In this Study, the technical difficulties are of two kinds ; the first are so apparent that the kind of work required to master them is quite obvious ; the others, on the contrary, are concealed and can be revealed only by a searching analysis. Indeed, they gradually come to light as the execution of the piece progresses towards perfection, and they are practically the real and essential difficulties of the Study.

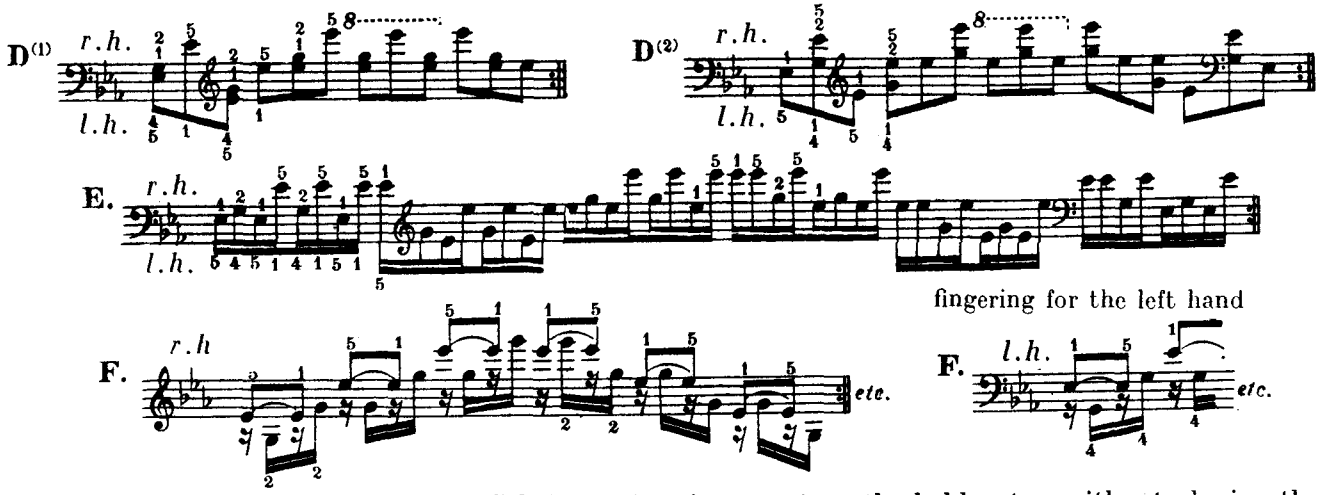
We classify in the first category the difficulties pertaining to a correct playing of the arpeggios for which it is necessary : to bring out the powerful melodic design which is their framework, to shift the hand along the keyboard, and to use the thumb and the 5th finger successively on the same key.

As preliminary practice, we recommend the following variants and exercises which, after having been transposed into every degree of the chromatic scale, should be applied to all arpeggio-positions throughout the Study.



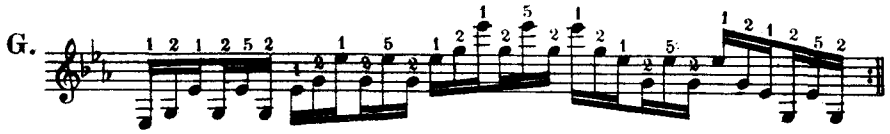
For the left hand, all of the foregoing exercises should be practised one octave lower.

Then, the following formulae :

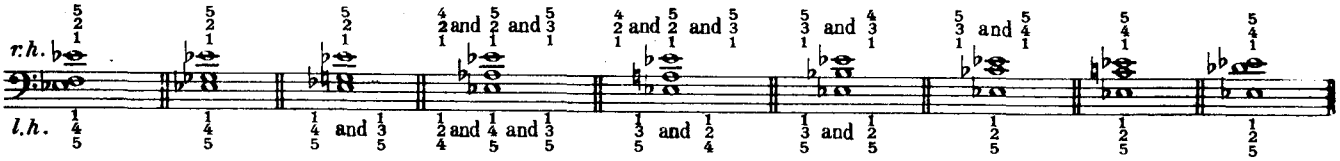


Slip the thumb in the place of the 5th finger (or vice-versa) on the held notes, without playing the note

Exercise for the right hand only :

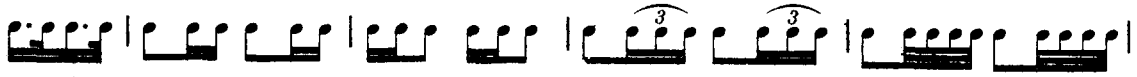


Exercises **D**, **E**, and **F** should be practised in both hands on every degree of the chromatic scale, according to the chord-combinations and with the fingerings hereunder :



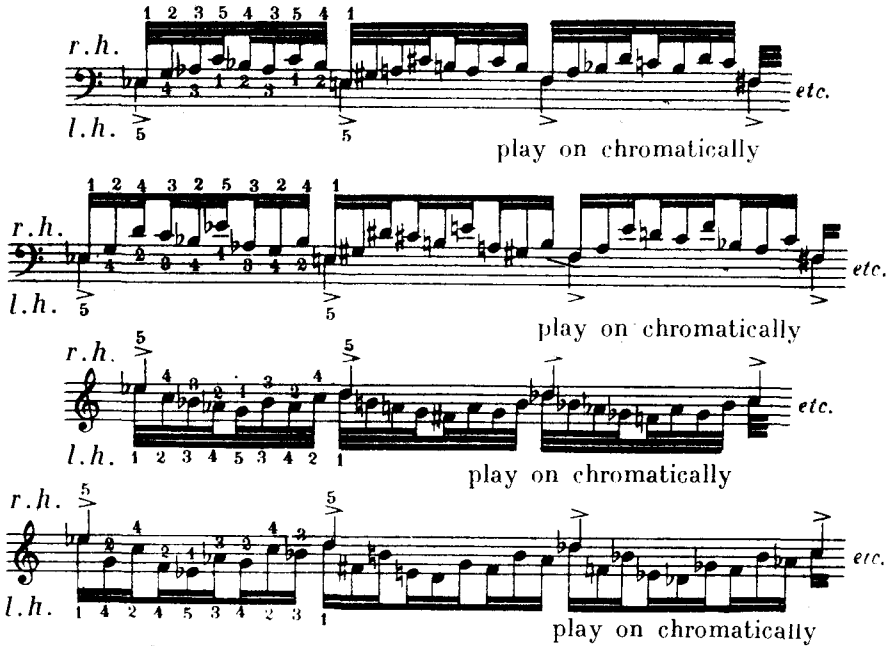
We specially recommend the practice of exercise **F.** which is most useful for developing the flexibility of the wrist-movements that is necessary to ensure the constant and regular hand-shiftings up and down the keyboard as the thumb replaces the 5th finger on the same key (or vice-versa).

In order to obtain equal strength of the fingers, practise the whole Study, one bar at a time, each hand separately ,with the following rhythms :



Transpose the Study, employing the same rhythms, into **C♯** minor and **B** minor.

Having overcome by the foregoing exercises the elementary mechanical difficulties, now practise the melodic part played by the thumb and the 5th finger. In order to increase their individual force of attack, we recommend the preparatory formulae hereunder :



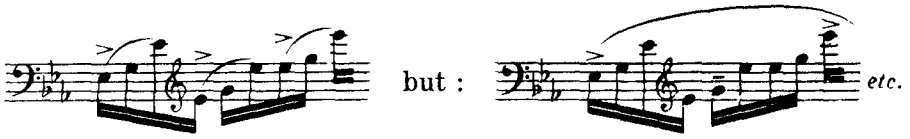
One should endeavour to make the accents on the held notes rather by pressing the fingers on the keys than by striking them. A more accented tone will be obtained by attacking very close to the outer edge of the keys.

Having carefully gone through these preliminary exercises, their principles should now be applied to the Study itself which should be practised in fragments of four or eight bars (according to the melodic curve of the theme), playing each passage about ten times over, always ***f***, gradually quickening the tempo, and without the pedal.

Then, the student should turn his attention to the second category of difficulties referred to at the beginning of this lesson. These difficulties will arise from the interpretation itself; they are too closely allied to the quality of the latter for it to be possible to suggest any preparatory exercises beforehand. Only by practising Chopin's text itself can these difficulties be overcome and only if great care and full attention be brought

First of all it will be necessary for the fingers to acquire absolute evenness and for the wrist-movements to be carefully appropriate to the rhythm and the dynamics in order to avoid giving the ear an impression of ternary division : this too often derives from the fact that undesirable accents coincide with the constant hand-shiftings required by the fingering used.

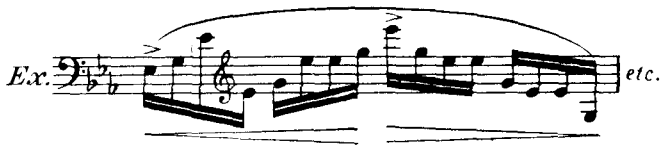
The rhythm of the figure is not :



Therefore, it will prove necessary now to make forcible accents with the thumb or the 5th finger — so as to firmly establish the rhythm (which is here rather ¢ than C), and now, lighten them sufficiently for the rhythm to remain unaltered.

On the other hand, when emphasizing the accents we have just mentioned, the student should avoid depriving the other fingers of the strength they require to ensure the necessary firmness to the melodic outline. The general nuance of the Study should be in full-tone colour : any fading of the latter's intensity — even if it is only to allow the lst and 3rd beat of each bar to predominate — would not be suitable either to its technical aim, or to its musical character.

In spite of Chopin's original editions not mentioning the nuance hereunder, and though they are content to have accents on the two extreme notes of each bar only, we believe it is in accordance with the composer's feeling to play the ascending arpeggio *crescendo*, and the descending one *diminuendo*.



Moreover, playing with the above dynamics compels the student to use maximum strength in the least resounding register of the pinao, thus acquiring an extra asset for the furthering of his pianistic progress.

It appears needless to say that the performer should be careful to observe a perfect legato throughout the piece, notwithstanding the difficulties of stretch or unfavourable finger-positions on the keyboard.

This constant attention paid to legato-playing will benefit the fingers which will acquire more strength and evenness, the wrist-movements will gain in flexibility and will correspond more accurately and more easily with the shiftings of the hand, and the tone will acquire fullness.

The technical benefits derived from the above lesson will of course be increased by completing the work by a last exercise devoted to the pedal to which is allotted the part of lengthening the notes of the theme — even though up to this last exercise, accents and legato have been obtained by the strength of the fingers only.

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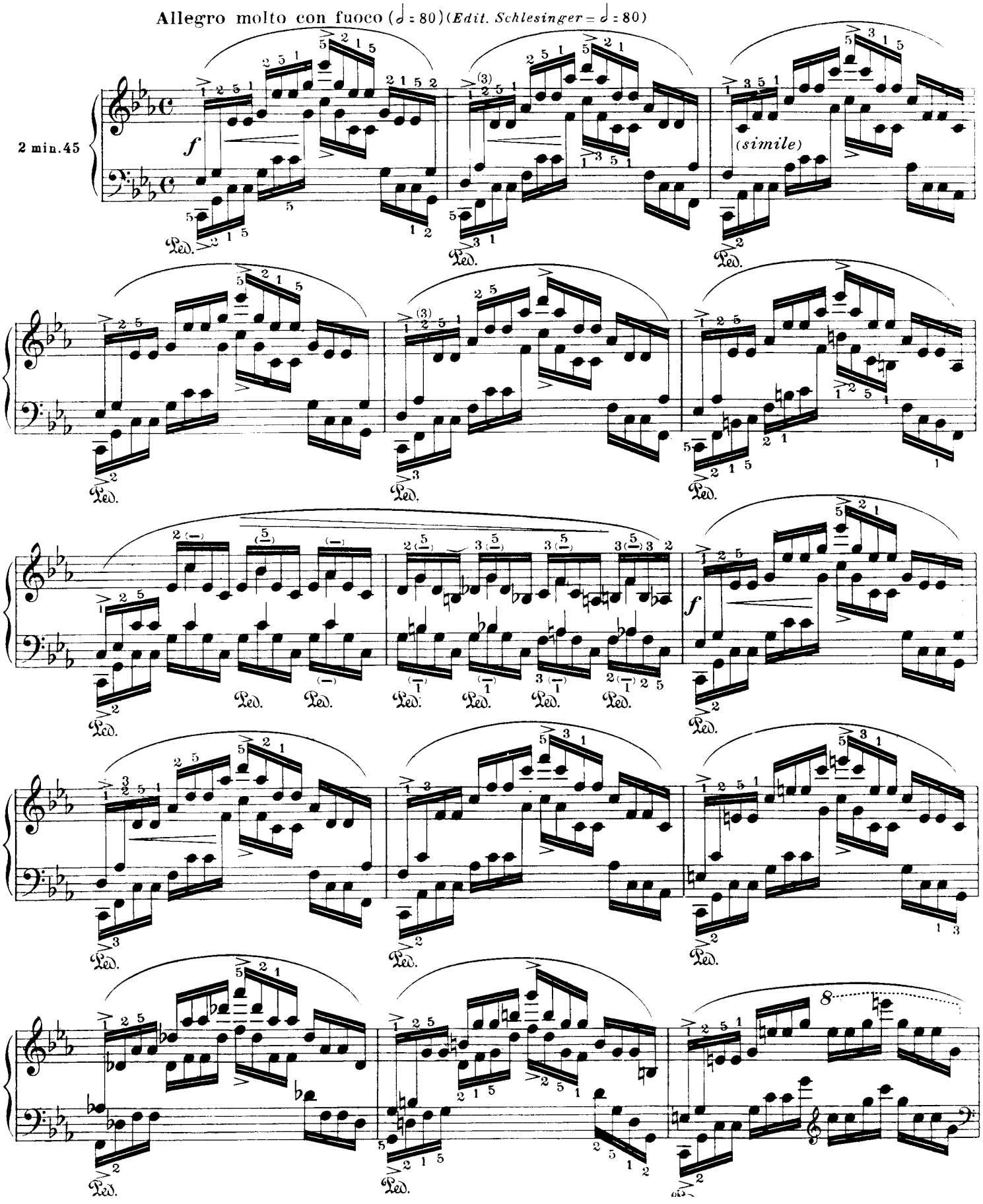
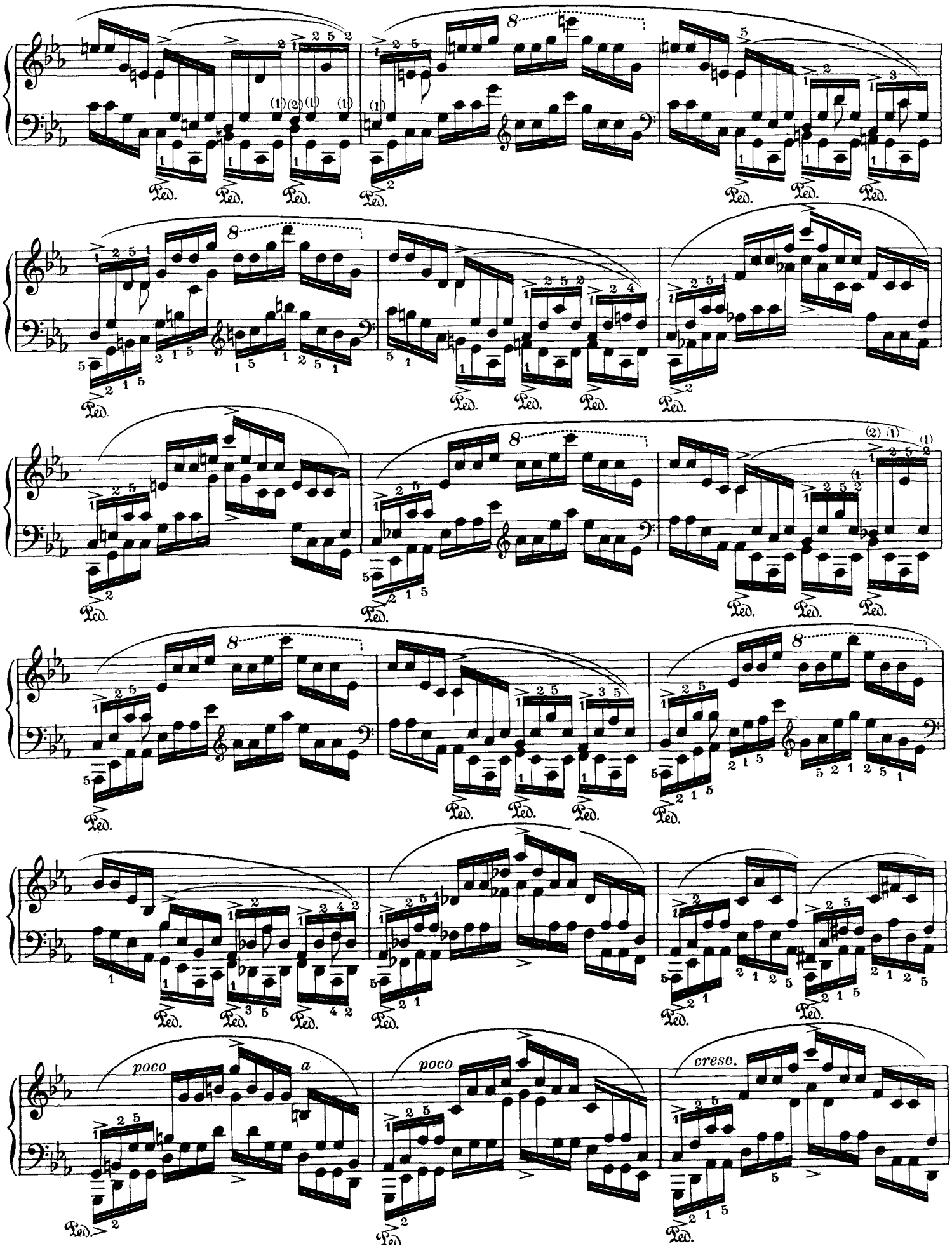
STUDY N° 12

(Op. 25)

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poco
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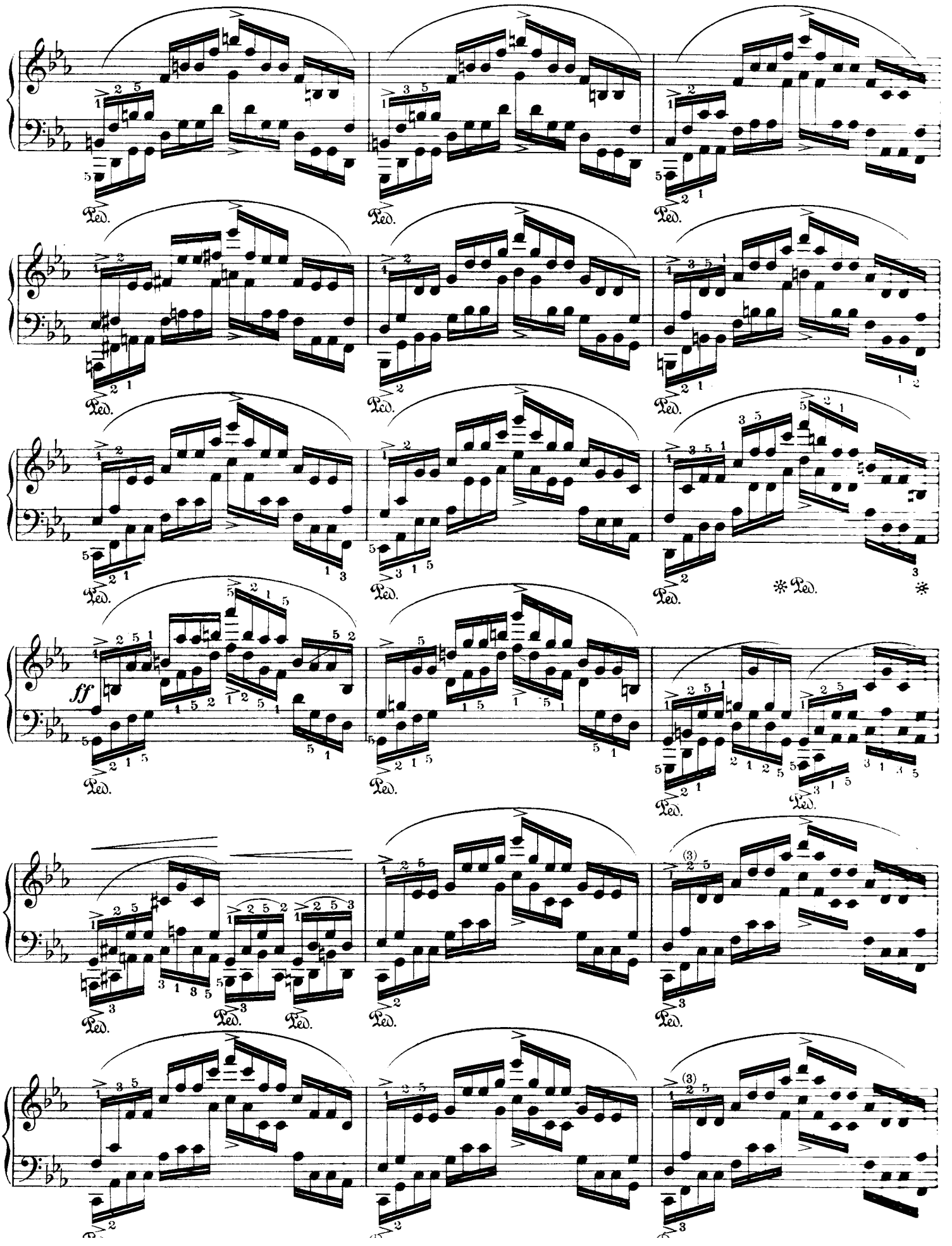
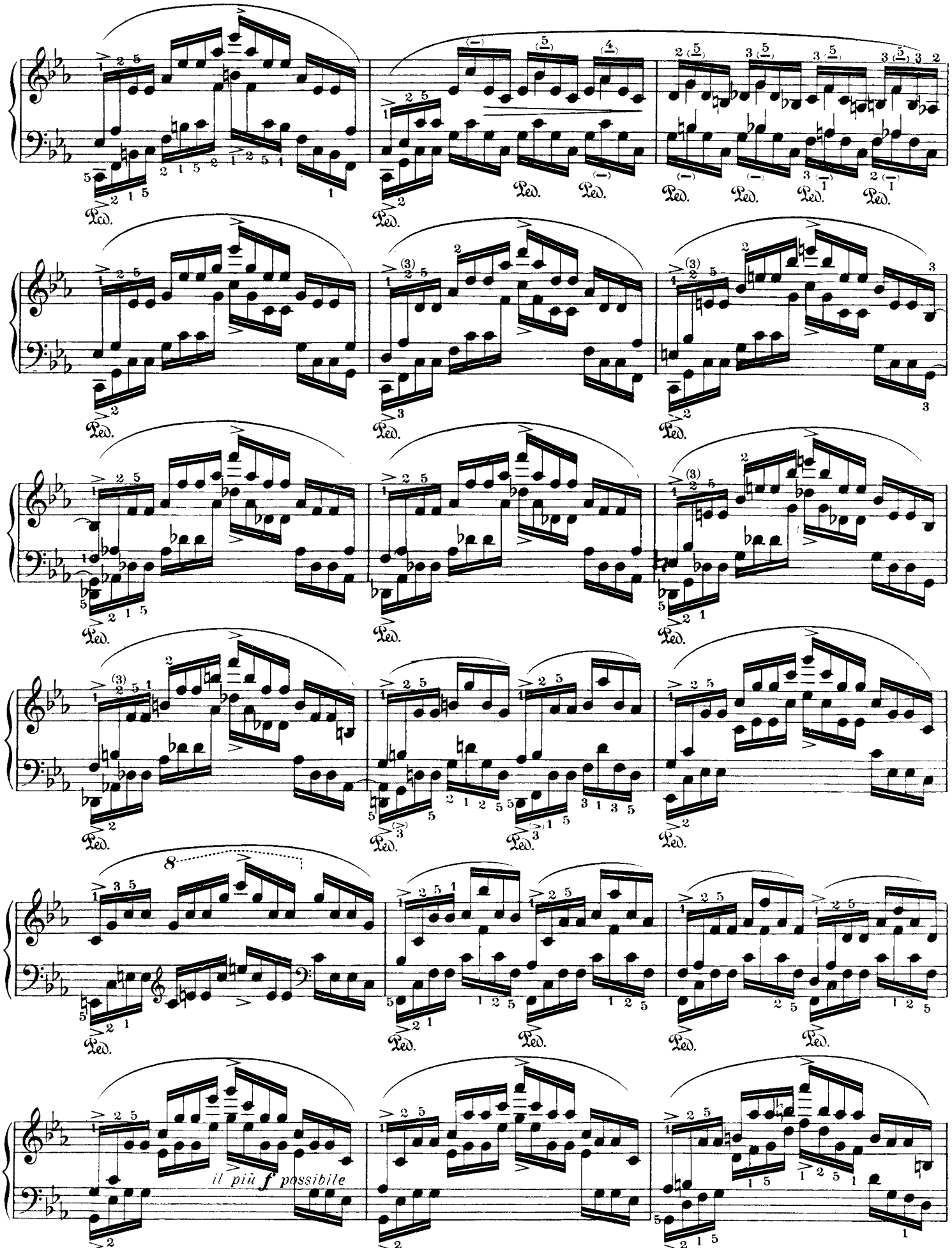

Ped.
ff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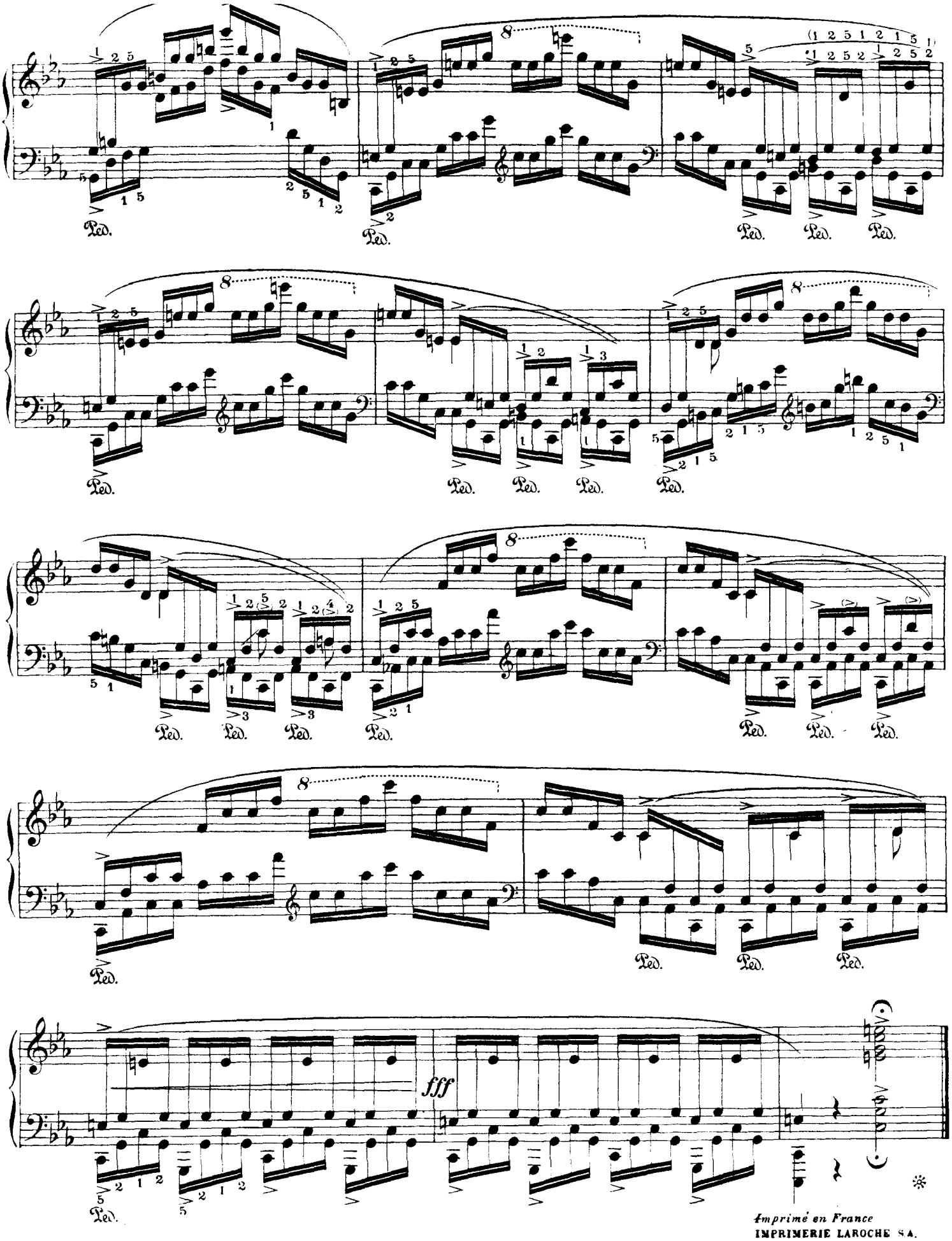
8
il più f possibile



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